THE PHILOSOPHY OF HISTORY.

By M. de VOLTAIRE.

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TO THE

MOST HIGH AND PUISSANT PRINCESS

CATHERINE THE SECOND,

EMPRESS OF ALL THE RUSSIAS,

PROTECTRESS OF THE ARTS AND SCIENCES,

BY HER GENIUS ENTITLED TO JUDGE OF ANCIENT NATIONS,

AS SHE IS BY HER MERIT WORTHY TO GOVERN HER OWN.

Humbly dedicated by the AUTHOR.

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THE PHILOSOPHY OF HISTORY.

CHAP. I.

INTRODUCTION.

YOU wiſh that ancient hiſtory had been written by philoſophers, becauſe you are deſirous of reading it as a philoſopher. You ſeek for uſeful truths, and you ſay you have ſcarce found any thing but uſeleſs errors. Let us endeavour mutually to enlighten one another; let us endeavour to dig ſome precious monuments from under the ruins of ages.

We will begin by examining, whether the globe, which we inhabit, was formerly the ſame as it is at preſent.

Perhaps our world has undergone as many changes, as its ſtates have revolutions. It ſeems inconteſtable that the ocean formerly extended itſelf over immenſe tracts of land, now covered with great cities, and producing plenteous crops. You know

that thoſe deep ſhell-beds, which are found in Touraine and elſewhere, could have been gradually depoſited only by the flowing of the tide, in a long ſucceſſion of ages. Touraine, Britanny and Normandy, with their contiguous lands, were for a much longer time part of the ocean, than they have been provinces of France and Gaul.

Can the floating ſands of the northern parts of Africa, and the banks of Syria in the vicinity of Ægypt, be any thing elſe but ſands of the ſea, remaining in heaps upon the gradual ebbing of the tide? Herodotus, who does not always lie, doubtleſs relates a very great truth, when he ſays, that according to the relations given by the Ægyptian prieſts, the Delta was not always land. May we not ſay the ſame of the ſandy countries towards the Baltic ſea? Do not the Ciclades manifeſtly indicate, by all the flats that ſurround them, by the vegetations, which are eaſily perceptible under the water that waſhes them, that they made part of the continent?

The ſtreights of Sicily, that ancient gulph of Charibdes and Sylla, ſtill dangerous for ſmall barks, do they not ſeem to tell us that Sicily was formerly joined to Apulia, as the ancients always thought? Mount Veſuvius and mount Ætna have the ſame foundations under the ſea, which ſeparates them. Veſuvius did not begin to be a dangerous volcano, till Ætna ceaſed to be ſo; one of their mouths caſts forth flames, when the other is quiet. A violent

earthquake ſwallowed up that part of this mountain, which united Naples to Sicily.

All Eurpoe knows that the ſea overflowed one half of Friſeland. About forty years ago, I ſaw the church ſteeples of eighteen villages, near Mardyke, which ſtill appeared above the inundation, but have ſince yielded to the force of the waves. It is reaſonable to think that the ſea in time quits its antient banks. Obſerve Aiguemonte, Frejus, and Ravenna, which were all ſea-ports, but are no longer ſuch. Obſerve Damietta, where we landed in the time of the Croiſades, and which is now actually ten miles diſtant from the ſhore, in the midſt of the land. The ſea is daily retiring from Rozetta: nature every where teſtifies thoſe revolutions; and if ſtars have been loſt in the immenſity of ſpace, if the ſeventh Pleyade has long ſince diſappeared, if others have vaniſhed from ſight into the milky way, ſhould we be ſurpriſed that this little globe of ours undergoes perpetual changes?

I dare not, however, aver that the ſea has formed or even waſhed all the mountains of the earth. The ſhells, which have been found near mountains, may have there been left by ſome ſmall teſtacious fiſh, the inhabitants of the lakes; and theſe lakes, which have been moved by earthquakes, may have formed other lakes of inferior note. Ammon's horns, the ſtarry ſtones, the lenticulars, the judaics, and gloſſopetræ appeared to me as terreſtrial foſſils. I did not dare think that theſe gloſſopetræ could be the

tongues of ſea dogs; and I am of opinion with him who ſaid one might as eaſily believe that ſome thouſands of women came and depoſited their *conchæ veneris* upon a ſhore, as to think that thouſands of ſea dogs came there to leave their tongues.

Let us take care not to mingle the dubious with the certain, the falſe with the true; we have proofs enough of the great revolutions of the globe, without going in ſearch of freſh ones.

The greateſt of theſe revolutions would be the loſs of the Atlantic land, if it were true that this part of the world ever exiſted. It is probable that this land conſiſted of nothing elſe than the iſland of Madeira, diſcovered perhaps by the Phenicians, the moſt enterpriſing navigators of antiquity, forgotten afterwards, and at length rediſcovered, in the beginning of the fifteenth century of our vulgar æra.

In ſhort, it evidently appears by the ſlopes of all the lands which are waſhed by the ocean, by thoſe gulphs which the irruptions of the ſea have formed, by thoſe archipelago's that are ſcattered in the midſt of the waters, that the two hemeſpheres have loſt upwards of two thouſand leagues of land on one ſide, which they have regained on the other.

CHAP II.

Of the different RACES of MEN.

WHAT is the moſt intereſting to us, is the ſenſible difference in the ſpecies of men, who inhabit the four known quarters of the world.

None but the blind can doubt that the whites, the negroes, the Albinoes, the Hottentots, the Laplanders, the Chineſe, the Americans, are races entirely different.

No curious traveller ever paſſed through Leyden without ſeeing part of the *reticulum mucoſum* of a negro diſſected by the celebrated Ruiſh. The remainder of this membrane is in the cabinet of curioſities at Peterſburg. This membrane is black, and communicates to negroes that inherent blackneſs, which they do not loſe, but in ſuch diſorders as may deſtroy this texture, and allow the greaſe to iſſue from its cells, and form white ſpots under the ſkin.

Their round eyes, ſquat noſes, and invariable thick lips, the woolly heads, and the meaſure of their intellects, make a prodigious difference between them and other ſpecies of men; and what demonſtrates, that they are not indebted for this difference to their climates, is that negro men and women, being tranſported into the coldeſt countries, con-

ſtantly produce animals of their own ſpecies; and that mulattoes are only a baſtard race of black men and white women, or white men and black women, as aſſes, ſpecifically different from horſes, produce mules by copulating with mares.

The Albinoes are, indeed, a very ſmall and ſcarce nation; they inhabit the center of Africa. Their weakneſs does not allow them to make excurſions far from the caverns which they inhabit; the negroes, nevertheleſs, catch ſome of them at times, and theſe we purchaſe of them as curioſities. I have ſeen two of them, a thouſand other Europeans have ſeen ſome. To ſay that they are dwarf negroes, whoſe ſkin has been blanched by a kind of leproſy, is like ſaying that the blacks themſelves are whites blackened by the leproſy. An Albino no more reſembles a Guinea negro, than he does an Engliſhman or a Spaniard. Their whiteneſs is not like ours, it does not appear like fleſh, it has no mixture of white and brown; it is the colour of linnen, or rather of bleached wax; their hair and eye-brows are like the fineſt and ſofteſt ſilk; their eyes have no ſort of ſimilitude with thoſe of other men, but they come very near partridges eyes. Their ſhape reſembles that of the Laplanders, but their head that of no other nation whatever; as their hair, their eyes, their ears are all different, and they have nothing that ſeems to belong to man but the ſtature of their bodies, with the faculty of ſpeaking and thinking, but in a degree very different from ours.

The apron, which nature has given to the Caffres, and whoſe flabby and lank ſkin falls from their navel half way down their thighs; the black breaſts of the Samoiedes women, the beard of the males of our continent, and the beardleſs chins of the Americans, are ſuch ſtriking diſtinctions, that it is ſcarce poſſible to imagine that they are not each of them of different races.

But now, if it ſhould be aſked, from whence came the Americans? it ſhould be aſked from whence came the inhabitants of the Terra Auſtralis? and it has been already anſwered, that the ſame providence which placed men in Norway, planted ſome alſo in America, and under the antartic circle, in the ſame manner as it planted trees and made graſs to grow there.

Several of the learned have ſurmiſed, that ſome races of men, or animals aproximating to men, have periſhed: the Albinoes are ſo few in number, ſo weak, and ſo ill uſed by the negroes, that there is reaſon to apprehend this ſpecies will not long ſubſiſt.

Satyrs are mentioned by all the ancient writers. I do not ſee why their exiſtence ſhould be impoſſible: monſters brought forth by women are ſtill ſtifled in Calabria. It is not improbable that in hot countries monkies may have enſlaved girls. Herodotus in his ſecond book, ſays, that in his voyage into Ægypt, there was a woman in the province of Mendes, who publicly copulated with a he-goat; and he calls all

Ægypt to witneſs the truth of it. It is forbidden in Leviticus, chap. xvii. to commit abominations with he and ſhe-goats. Theſe copulations muſt then have been common, and till ſuch time as we are better informed, it is to be preſumed that a monſtrous ſpecies muſt have ariſen from theſe abominable amours; but if ſuch did exiſt, they could have no influence over the human kind; and like the mules, who do not engender, they could not interrupt the courſe of nature in the other races.

With reſpect to the duration of the life of man (if you abſtract that line of Adam's deſcendants, conſecrated by the Jewiſh books) it is probable that all the races of man have enjoyed a life nearly as ſhort as our own; as animals, trees, and all productions of nature, have ever had the ſame duration.

But it ſhould be obſerved, that commerce not having always introduced among mankind the productions and diſorders of other climates, and men being more robuſt and laborious in the ſimplicity of a country life, for which they are born, they muſt have enjoyed a more equal health, and a life ſomewhat longer than in effeminacy, or in the unhealthy works of great cities; that is to ſay, that if in Conſtantinople, Paris, or London, one man in 20000 attains the age of an hundred years, it is probable that twenty men in twenty years arrived formerly at that age. This is ſeen in ſeveral parts of America, where mankind have preſerved a pure ſtate of nature.

The plague and the ſmall pox, which the Arabian caravans communicated in a courſe of years to the people of Aſia and Europe, were for a long time unknown. Thus mankind in Aſia and the fine climates of Europe multiplied more eaſily than elſewhere. Accidental diſorders, and ſome wounds were not, indeed, cured, as they are at preſent; but the advantage of never being afflicted with the plague or ſmall pox, compenſated all the dangers attendant on our nature; ſo that, every thing conſidered, it is to be believed that human kind formerly enjoyed in the favourable climates a more healthy and happy life, than ſince the foundation of the great empires.

CHAP. III.

Of the ANTIQUITY of NATIONS.

ALMOST every people, but particularly thoſe of Aſia, reckon a ſucceſſion of ages, which terrifies us. This conformity among them ſhould at leaſt excite us to enquire, whether their ideas of antiquity were deſtitute of all probability.

It certainly requires a prodigious length of time for a nation to unite as one body of people, to become powerful, warlike, and learned. Look to America; there were but two kingdoms in that quarter of the globe when it was diſcovered; and

the art of writing was not yet invented in either of thoſe kingdoms. All the other parts of this vaſt continent were divided, and ſtill are, into ſmall ſocieties to whom arts are unknown. All the colonies live in huts; they cover themſelves with the ſkins of animals in the cold climates, and go almoſt naked in thoſe that are temperate. The firſt live by hunting, the others upon kneaded roots. They have not ſought after any other kind of life, becauſe we never deſire what we are unacquainted with. Their induſtry cannot extend beyond their preſſing wants. The Samoides, the Laplanders, the inhabitants of Siberia, and thoſe of Kamſhatka, have made ſtill leſs progreſs than the people of America. The greateſt part of the negroes, and all the Caffres, are plunged in one ſame ſtupidity.

A concurrence of favourable circumſtances for ages, are neceſſary to form a great ſociety of men, united under the ſame laws. The like is neceſſary to form a language. Men would not articulate ſounds, if they were not taught to pronounce words; they would utter nothing but a confuſed noiſe, and could not be underſtood but by ſigns. A child ſpeaks after ſome time, only by imitation; and he would deliver himſelf with great difficulty, if he remained tongue-tied in his early years.

More time was perhaps neceſſary for men endowed with particular talents, to teach others the firſt rudiments of an imperfect and barbarous language, than was afterwards needful to compaſs the eſta-

bliſhment of ſome ſociety. There are ſome whole nations who have never been able to form a regular language and a diſtinct pronunciation. Such were even the Troglodites, according to Pliny. Such are ſtill thoſe who inhabit toward the Cape of Good Hope. But what a ſpace ſtill remains between this barbarous jargon, and the art of painting one's ideas! the diſtance is immenſe.

The ſtate of brutes, in which human-kind remained a long time, muſt needs have rendered the ſpecies infinitely ſcarce in all climates. Men could hardly ſupply their wants, and not underſtanding each other, they could communicate no mutual aſſiſtance. Carnivorous beaſts, having a ſtronger inſtinct than they, muſt have covered the earth, and devoured part of the human ſpecies.

Man could not defend himſelf againſt ferocious animals, but by throwing ſtones, and arming himſelf with thick branches of trees; and from thence, perhaps, aroſe that confuſed notion of antiquity, that the firſt heroes combated lions and wild boars with clubs.

The moſt populous countries were doubtleſs in hot climates, where man eaſily found a plentiful ſubſiſtence in cocoa, dates, pine-apples and rice, which grow ſpontaneouſly. It is very probable that India, China, the banks of the Euphrates, and the Tigris, were very populous, when the other regions were almoſt deſolate. On the other hand, in

our northern climates, it was more eaſy to meet with a herd of wolves than a ſociety of men.

CHAP IV.

Of the Knowlege of the Soul.

WHAT notion had the firſt people of the ſoul? The ſame which all our boors have, before they have underſtood their catechiſm, or even after they underſtood it. They only acquire confuſed ideas, which they never reflect upon. Nature has been too kind to them to make them metaphyſicians: that nature is perpetual, and every where alike. She made the firſt ſocieties ſenſible that there was a being ſuperior to man, when they were afflicted with uncommon misfortunes. She in the ſame manner taught them, that there is ſomething in man which acts and thinks. They did not diſtinguiſh this faculty from that of life.

By what degrees can one arrive at imagining, in our phyſical being, another metaphyſical being? Men, entirely occupied with their wants, were certainly not philoſophers.

In the courſe of time, ſocieties ſomewhat poliſhed were formed, in which a ſmall number of men were at leiſure to think. It muſt have happened that a man ſenſibly affected with the death of his father, his brother, or his wife, ſaw the perſon whoſe loſs

he regretted in his dream: two or three dreams of this ſort muſt have cauſed uneaſineſs throughout a whole colony. Behold a dead corſe appearing to the living, and yet the deceaſed, remaining in the ſame place, with the worms gnawing him! This then, that wanders in the air, is ſomething that was in him. It is his ſoul, his ſhade, his manes; it is a ſuperficial figure of himſelf. Such is the natural reaſoning of ignorance, which begins to reaſon. This is the opinion of all the primitive known times, and muſt conſequently have been that of thoſe unknown. The idea of a being purely immaterial could not have preſented itſelf to the imagination of thoſe who were acquainted with nothing but matter. Smiths, carpenters, maſons, labourers, were neceſſary, before a man was found who had leiſure to meditate. All manual arts, doubtleſs, preceded metaphyſics for many ages.

We ſhould remark, by the bye, that in the middle age of Greece, in the time of Homer, the ſoul was nothing more than an aereal image of the body. Ulyſſes ſaw ſhades and manes in hell; could he ſee ſpirits?

We ſhall, in the ſequel, conſider how the Greeks borrowed from the Ægyptians the idea of hell and the apotheoſis of the dead; how they believed, as well as other people, a ſecond life, without ſuſpecting the ſpirituality of the ſoul: on the contrary, they could not imagine that an incorporeal being could be ſuſceptible of either good or evil: and I

do not know whether Plato was the firſt who ſpoke of a being purely ſpiritual. This, perhaps, is one of the greateſt efforts of human knowlege. We are not, at this time of day, ſuch novices upon that ſubject, and yet we conſider the world as ſtill unformed and ſcarcely faſhioned.

CHAP. V.

Of the Religion of the First Men.

WHEN, after a number of ages, ſeveral ſocieties were formed, it is credible that there was ſome religion, a kind of ruſtic worſhip. Man, at that time entirely occupied with providing the neceſſaries of life, could not ſoar to the Author of life; he could not be acquainted with the connections of the various parts of the univerſe, thoſe innumerable cauſes and effects, which to the wiſe proclaim an eternal architect.

The knowlege of a God, creator, requiter, and avenger, is the fruit of cultivated reaſon, or of revelation.

All people were therefor, for ages, what the inhabitants of the ſeveral coaſts of Africa, of ſeveral iſlands, aud half the Americans, are at preſent. Thoſe people have no idea of a ſole God, creator of all things, omnipreſent, and exiſting of himſelf to all eternity. They ſhould not, however, be called

atheiſts in the uſual ſenſe; for they do not deny a ſupreme being; they are not acquainted with him; they have no idea of him. The Caffres take an inſect for their protector, the negroes a ſerpent. Among the Americans, ſome adore the moon, others a tree. Several have no worſhip whatever.

The Peruvians, when they became poliſhed, adored the ſun. Either Mango Capac had made them believe that he was the ſon of that planet, or a dawn of reaſon made them think they owed ſome acknowlegement to the planet which animated nature.

In order to know how theſe different doctrines and ſuperſtitions gained ground, it ſeems to me neceſſary to follow the career of human underſtanding left alone without a guide. The inhabitants of a village, who are little better than ſavages, perceive the fruits which ſhould nouriſh them periſh: an inundation carries away ſome cabins: others are deſtroyed by thunder. Who has done them this miſchief? It could not be one of their fellow citizens, for they have all equally ſuffered. It is therefor ſome ſecret power that has afflicted them, and muſt therefor be appeaſed. How is it to be effected? By uſing it as they do thoſe whom they are deſirous of pleaſing; in making it ſome ſmall preſents. There is a ſerpent in the neighbourhood; it is very likely the ſerpent: they offer him milk near the cavern, whither he retires; from that time he becomes ſacred; he is invoked when

they are at war with the neighbouring village, who, on their ſide, have choſen another protector.

Other little colonies find themſelves in the ſame ſituation. But there being no object near them to excite their terror and adoration, they call in general the being whom they ſuſpect has done them miſchief, the maſter, the lord, the chief, the ruler.

This idea being more conformable than the others to the dawn of reaſon, which increaſes and ſtrengthens with time, poſſeſſes every one's head, when the nation is become more numerous. Thus we find that many nations have had no other God than their maſter, their lord. Such was Adonai among the Phenicians, Baal, Milkom, and Adad, with the people of Syria. All theſe names ſignify nothing more than the Lord, the Powerful.

Every ſtate, then, had in time its tutelar divinity, without knowing even what was a god, or being able to imagine that the neighbouring ſtate was not equally furniſhed as themſelves, with a real protector. For how could they think, when they had a lord, that others had not one alſo? The only thing to be known was, which among ſo many maſters, lords, and gods, would be victorious, when the nations fought againſt each other.

This was doubtleſs the origin of that opinion, which ſo generally and ſo long prevailed, that every people was really protected by the divinity they had choſen. This idea was ſo deeply rooted in men, that in after-times, it was adopted by the Jews

themſelves. Jephtha ſaid to the Ammonites, "Do "you not poſſeſs, by right, what your lord Cha- "mos has given you? Suffer us, then, to poſſeſs "the land which our lord Adonai has promiſed "unto us."

There are two other paſſages equally ſtrong, which are thoſe of Jeremiah and Iſaiah, where it is ſaid, "what reaſon had the lord Melkom to take "poſſeſſion of the land of Gad?" It is evident by theſe expreſſions, that the Jews, though ſervants to Adonai, acknowleged, nevertheleſs, the lord Melkom and the lord Chamos.

Still farther: nothing was more common than to adopt ſtrange gods. The Greeks acknowleged thoſe of the Ægyptians; I do not mean Apis's bull and Anubis's dog, but Ammon and the twelve great gods. The Romans adored all the Gods of the Greeks. Jeremiah, Amos, and St. Stephen, aſſure as, that the Jews for forty years in the deſert acknowleged no other than Moloc, Remphan, and Kicim; that they made no ſacrifice, and prefented no offering to the lord Adonai, whom they afterwards adored. It is true that the Pentateuch ſpeaks of nothing but the golden calf, which no prophet mentions: but this is not the place to clear up this great difficulty; it is ſufficient that they eqnally revered Moſes, Jeremiah, Amos, and St. Stephen, who ſeem to contradict one another, and yet are reconciled

I ſhall obſerve only, that, except in time of war and bloody fanaticiſm, which extinguiſhed all hu-

manity, and which rendered the manners, laws, and religion of a people, the objects of horror to another people, all nations were very well ſatisfied that their neighbours had their own particular gods; and that they frequently imitated the worſhip and ceremonies of ſtrangers.

The Jews themſelves, though they looked with horror upon the reſt ofmen which deteſtation increaſed with time, imitated the circumciſion of the Arabs and Egyptians; like the laſt they accuſtomed themſelves to make a diſtinction of meats; borrowed from them ablutions, proceſſions, and ſacred dances, the hazel goat, and red cow. They often adored the Baal and Belphigor of their neighbours: ſo much do nature and cuſtom prevail over law, particularly when the law is not generally known to the people. Thus Jacob, grandſon to Abraham, made no difficulty of wedding two ſiſters, who were what we call idolaters, and daughters to an idolatrous father. Moſes himſelf eſpouſed the daughter of an idolatrous Midianite.

Thoſe ſame Jews, who made ſuch on outcry againſt ſtrange worſhips, called, in their ſacred books, Nabucodonoſor, the anointed of the Lord; and the idolater Cyrus, alſo the anointed of the Lord One of their prophets was ſent to the idolater Ninivus. Eliſha allowed the idolater Naaman to go into the temple of Remnan. But to avoid anticipation; we know well enongh that men conſtantly run-counter to the laws by their manners. Let us not loſe ſight

of the ſubject we were conſidering, but continue to obſerve how different religions were eſtabliſhed.

The moſt poliſhed people of Aſia, on this ſide of the Euphrates, adored the planets. The Chaldeans, before the time of Zoroaſter, paid homage to the ſun; as did afterwards the Peruvians in another hemiſphere. This error muſt be very natural to man, as it has had ſo many followers in Aſia and America. A ſmall and half ſavage nation has but one protector. Does it become more numerous? the number of its gods is increaſed. The Ægyptians began by adoring Iſheth or Iris, and they at laſt adored cats The firſt homage the ruſtic Romans paid was to Mars; that of the Romans, maſters of Europe, was to the goddeſs of marriage and the god of thieves. Nevertheleſs, Cicero, all the philoſophers, and thoſe initiated, acknowlege a ſupreme and omnipotent God. They were all brought back to that point by reaſon, from whence ſavage men had departed by inſtinct.

The apotheoſis could not have been deviſed till long after the firſt kinds of worſhip. It is not natural immediately to make a god of a man whom we ſaw born like ourſelves, ſuffer like us maladies, chagrin, the miſeries of humanity, ſubject to the ſame humiliating wants, die and become food for worms. But this is what happened to almoſt all nations, after the revolutions of ſeveral ages.

A man who had done great things, who had been ſerviceable to human nature, could not in

truth be looked upon as a God, by thoſe who had ſeen him tremble with the ague, and ſeek for cloathing: but enthuſiaſts perſuade themſelves that, being poſſeſſed of eminent qualities, he had them from a God, and that he was the ſon of a God. In the ſame manner gods produced children all over the world; for without enumerating the dreams of ſo many people who preceded the Greeks, Bacchus, Perſius, Hercules, Caſtor, and Pollux, were ſons of Gods. Romulus was a ſon of God, Alexander was proclaimed a ſon of God in Ægypt; one Odin, with us northern nations, was a ſon of God; Mango Capac was ſon of the ſun in Peru. The hiſtorian of the Moguls, Abulgazi, relates that one of the grandmothers of Gingiſkan, named Alanku, when a girl, was impregnated by a celeſtial ray. Gingiſkan himſelf paſſed for the ſon of god And when Pope Innocent ſent brother Aſulin to Batoukan, grandſon to Gengis, this monk, who could not be preſented but to one of the vizers, ſaid he came from the vicar of God; the miniſter replied, is this vicar ignorant that he ſhould pay homage and tribute to the ſon of God, the great Batoukin his maſter?

With men fond of the marvellous, there is no great diſtance between a ſon of God and God. After two or three generations, the ſon partakes of the father's dominion. Thus temples were raiſed to all thoſe who were ſuppoſed to be born from the

ſupernatural correſpondence of the divinity with our wives and daughters.

Volumes might be written upon this ſubject; but all theſe volumes might be reduced to two words, which are, that the majority of mankind were for a long time in a ſtate of inſenſibility and imbecillity, and that, perhaps, the moſt inſenſible of all were thoſe who wanted to diſcover a ſignification in thoſe abſurd fables, and ingraft reaſon upon folly.

CHAP. VI.

Of the CUSTOMS and OPINIONS of almoſt all the ancient NATIONS.

NATURE being every where the ſame, men muſt neceſſarily have adopted the ſame truths, and fallen into the ſame errors, in regard to thoſe things which are the immediate objects of ſenſe, and the moſt ſtriking to the imagination. They muſt have attributed the noiſe and effects of thunder to ſome ſuperior being inhabiting the air. The people bordering upon the ocean, ſeeing great tides inundate their coaſts at the time of full moon, muſt naturally have imputed to the moon, the various effects which attended her different phaſes.

Among animals, the ſerpent muſt have appeared to them endowed with ſuperior intelligence; becauſe ſeeing it ſometimes caſt its ſkin, they had reaſon to

think it became young again. It might, then, by repeating this change, always remain youthful, and it was therefor believed immortal; ſo was it in Ægypt and Greece the ſymbol of immortality. The larger ſerpents, which were found near fountains, terrified the timorous from approaching them; and hence they were ſoon imagined to be the guardians of hidden treaſures. Thus a ſerpent was the fabled guard of the golden apples of the Heſperides; another watched over the golden fleece; and in celebrating the myſteries of Bacchus, the image of a ſerpent was carried, which ſeemed to guard a golden grape.

The ſerpent thus paſſing for the moſt ſubtle of animals, hence aroſe that ancient Indian fable, that God having created man gave him a drug, which inſured him a healthful and long life; but that man entruſted this divine preſent with his aſs, who, upon the road, becoming thirſty, was ſeduced to a neighbouring fountain by a ſerpent, who pretended to hold his burthen while he was drinking: thus it was that man by his negligence loſt immortality, and the ſerpent gained by his ſubtilty. Hence innumerable tales of aſſes and ſerpents.

Serpents were found, indeed, to be miſchievous animals; but as they were ſuppoſed to poſſeſs ſomething divine, nothing leſs than a deity was imagined capable of deſtroying them. Thus the ſerpent Python was killed by Apollo, and the great ſerpent Ophioneus waged war for a length of time againſt

the gods, before the Greeks had framed their Apollo. We find it related in a fragment of Phericides, that this fable of the great ſerpent, the enemy to the gods, was one of the moſt ancient among the Phenicians.

We have already found that dreams muſt have introduced the ſame ſuperſtition all over the earth. If whilſt awake, I am uneaſy for my wife or ſon's health, and in my ſleep I ſee them in the agonies of death; ſhould they die a few days after, it is not not to be doubted that the gods ſent me this warning. Is my dream not accompliſhed? it was a fallacious repreſentation, which the gods were pleaſed to terrify me with. Thus in Homer, Jupiter ſends a fallacious dream to Agamemnon chief of the Greeks. Indeed all dreams, true or falſe, the ſuperſtitious ſuppoſed to come from heaven. In the like manner oracles were ſuppoſed to be ordained upon earth.

Does a woman apply to the magi to know whether her huſband will die within the year or not? one of them anſwers yes, the other no. It is certain that one of them muſt be in the right; if her huſband lives, ſhe ſays nothing of the matter; if he dies, ſhe proclaims all over the city that the magi, who foretold his death, was a divine prophet. There are men in all countries who prognoſticate events, and who diſcover the moſt latent things. With the Ægyptians theſe men were called the ſeers, as Mane-

thian relates after Joſeph, in his diſcourſe againſt Appion.

There were ſeers in Chaldea and Syria. Every temple had its oracles; thoſe of Apollo gained ſuch great credit, that Rollin, in his Antient Hiſtory, records the oraculous predictions of Apollo to Crœſus. The God divines that the king will dreſs a tortoiſe in a braſs pan; and replies to the queſtion Crœſus puts to him concerning the length of his reign, that it will end when a mule mounts the throne of the Perſians. Rollin does not enquire whether theſe predictions, worthy only of Noſtredamus, were not made after the predicted event had happened. He does not in the leaſt queſtion the foreknowlege of the prieſts of Apollo, but believes that God allowed Apollo to ſpeak truth. This probably was to confirm the Pagans in their religion.

The origin of good and evil is a more philoſophical queſtion, which all the great poliſhed nations have agreed in, from Judea to Greece.

The firſt theologues of all nations muſt have put the ſame queſtion which we do from the age of fifteen, Why is there any evil upon earth?

It was taught in India, that Adimo, the daughter of Brama, brought forth from her navel, the juſt from her right ſide and the unjuſt from her left; and that it was from this left ſide that we originally deduced phyſical and moral evil. The Egyptians had their Typhon, who was the enemy of Oſiris.

The Perſians imagined that Arimanes pierced the egg, which Oromaſe laid, and communicated to it ſin. We know the Pandora of the Greeks: this is the fineſt of all the allegories which antiquity has handed down to us.

The allegory of Job was certainly wrote in Arabic, as the Hebrew and Greek verſions have retained ſeveral Arabic terms. This book, which is of great antiquity, repreſents Satan, who is the Arimanes of the Perſians, and the Typhon of the Egyptians, as wandering over the earth, and aſking permiſſion of the Lord to afflict Job. Satan ſeems indeed to be in ſubordination to the Lord; but it afterward appears that Satan is a very powerful being, capable of inflicting diſorders, and deſtroying the animal world.

So many people really agreed, without knowing it, in the belief of two principles, that ſo much of the univerſe as was then known was in ſome meaſure Manichean.

Every people muſt have allowed expiations, for where was the man who had not been guilty of great injuries againſt ſociety? and where was the man whoſe natural inſtinct did not prompt him to remorſe? Water cleanſed their body and veſtments of filth, fire purified metals; it was therefor neceſſary that water and fire ſhould purify ſouls: nor were there any temples without holy water and ſacred fire.

Men plunged themſelves into the Ganges, into

the Indus, and into the Euphrates, when it was new moon, and particularly during the eclipſes. This emerſion expiated their ſins. If they did not purify themſelves in the Nile, it was only for fear that the penitents might have been devoured by crocodiles. But the prieſts, who purified themſelves for the people, plunged themſelves into large tubs of water, where they alſo bathed thoſe criminals who came to aſk pardon of the gods.

The Greeks had in all their temples ſacred baths, as well as ſacred fires, which were univerſal ſymbols with all men of the purity of ſouls. In a word, ſuperſtition ſeems to have been eſtabliſhed in all nations and among all people, except the men of letters in China.

CHAP. VII.

Of Savages.

DO you underſtand by ſavages, thoſe ruſtics who live in cabins with their females, and ſome animals, inceſſantly expoſed to all the intemperance of the ſeaſons, acquainted with nothing but the earth that nouriſhes them; the market where they ſometimes repair to ſell their commodities, in order to purchaſe ſome coarſe raiments; ſpeaking a jargon which is unintelligible in cities; furniſhed with few ideas, and conſequently few expreſſions;

ſubjected, without knowing why, to a penman, to whom they carry every year half of what they have earned by the ſweat of their brow; meeting upon certain days in a kind of barn, to celebrate ceremonies which they no way comprehend; liſtening to a man dreſſed differently from themſelves, whom they do not in the leaſt underſtand; ſometimes quiting their cottages at the beat of a drum, and engaging to go and fight in a foreign land, to ſlay their own likeneſſes, for a quarter of what they would earn by working at home? There are ſuch ſavages as theſe all over Europe. It muſt certainly be agreed that the people of Canada, and the Caffres, whom we have been pleaſed to ſtile ſavages, are infinitely ſuperior to our own. The Huron, the Algonquin, the Illinois, the Caffre, the Hottentot, have the art of fabricating every thing that is needful for them; this art our ruſtics are wanting in. The colonies of America and Africa are free, and our ſavages have not even the idea of freedom.

The ſuppoſed ſavages of America receive ambaſſadors from our colonies, which avarice and imprudence have tranſplanted near their territories. They are acquainted with honour, which none of our European ſavages ever heard mentioned. They have a country, they love it and defend it; they make treaties, they fight courageouſly, and often ſpeak with heroic energy. Is there a finer reply from all Plutarch's great men than that of the chief of the Canadians, to whom a European nation pro-

poſed ceding their patrimony; "We are born upon "this land, our fathers were buried here; can we "ſay to our fathers bones, Riſe up and come with "us into a foreign land?"

Theſe Canadians are Spartans in compariſon to our ruſtics, who vegetate in our villages, and the Sybarites, who enervate themſelves in our cities.

Do you underſtand by ſavages two footed animals, walking occaſionally upon their hands, wandering alone in foreſts, *ſalvatici*, *ſelvagi*, copulating at a venture, forgetting the females to whom they were united, equally unacquainted with their fathers and their children, driving like brutes, without the inſtinct and reſources of brutes? Writers have averred this to be the true ſtate of man, and that we have only miſerably degenerated, ſince we have changed. I do not think this ſolitary life, which our forefathers are ſuppoſed to have led, is in human nature.

We are, if I miſtake not, in the foremoſt rank (if it is allowable to be ſaid) of animals living in herds, like bees, ants, bevers, geeſe, fowls, ſheep, etc. If we meet with a ſtraggling bee, is it to be concluded, that it is in a ſtate of pure nature, and that thoſe who work in the hive are degenerated?

Has not every animal his peculiar inſtinct, which he is neceſſarily compelled to obey? what is this inſtinct? the diſpoſition of the organs, the motion of which time diſcovers. This inſtinct cannot diſplay

itſelf immediately, becauſe the organs have not acquired their greateſt perfection.

Leur pouvoir eſt conſtant, leur principe eſt divin,
Il faut que l' enfant croiſſe avant qu' il les exerce;
Il ne les connait pas ſous la main qui le berce,
Le moineau dans l'inſtant qu'il a reçû le jour,
Sans plumes dans ſon nid peut-il ſentir l'amour?
Le renard en naiſſant va-t-il chercher ſa proye?
Les inſectes changeants qui nous filent la ſoye,
Les eſſains bourdonnants de ces filles du ciel,
Qui pétriſſent la cire, et compoſent le miel,
Si tôt qu'ils ſont éclos forment-ils leur ouvrage?
Tout s'accroit par le temps, tout meurit avec l'âge.
Chaque être a ſon objet, et dans l'inſtant marqué
Marche et touche à ſon but par le ciel indiqué.

Their principles a ſacred inſtinct moves,
And truth's unvaried law their power improves:
But theſe th' unconſcious infant cannot feel,
'Till ſtrength and ripen'd thought ſuch powers reveal.
Can the young fibres of th' unfeather'd dove
So ſoon confeſs the ſoft alarms of love?
Or dare the new-faln fox through foreſts rove?
The changling worm that ſpins the ſilken clue,
The bee who ſips the flowers ambroſial dew,
Whoſe wond'rous art and induſtry might vie
With the fair ſiſters of the peopled ſky;
Do they firſt ſpringing from their parent ſoil,
While yet untaught, attempt their curious toil?

Not ſo! all nature's children grow with time,
Age ripens every fruit in every clime.
Each being here endow'd with fitteſt power
Has ſtill its object at the appointed hour:
Improv'd by ſtrength, and gradually refin'd,
Moves and attains the goal by heaven deſign'd.

Do we not really ſee that all animals, as well as every other being, invariably execute that law which nature has preſcribed to their ſpecies? The bird builds its neſt, as the ſtars perform their courſe, by a principle which can never alter. Why ſhould man only have changed? had he been deſtined to purſue a ſolitary life, like the other carnivorous animals, could he ſo far counteract the law of nature as to live in ſociety? and if he were made to live in herds like animals of the barton, could he immediately have perverted his deſtiny to that degree, as to live for ages in ſolitude? He is in a ſtate of amelioration, and from thence it is concluded that his nature has been perverted; but why may it not be inferred that he has arrived at that degree of perfection which nature has limited to humanity?

All mankind live in ſociety; can we from thence deduce that they were not in the ſame ſtate formerly? Would this not be like concluding that bulls were not formerly poſſeſſed of horns, becauſe they do not exiſt without them?

Men in general have ever been what they now

are: by this I would not mean to ſay that they always had fine cities, cannon that were twenty-four-pounders, comic operas, and religious convents; but man alway had the ſame inſtinct, which prompted him to love himſelf, in the companion of his pleaſures, in his children, in his grand-children, in the works of his hands.

This is immutable all over the univerſe. The foundation of ſociety ever exiſting, there has therefor ever been ſome ſociety, and we were conſequently not made to live like bears.

Strayed children have ſometimes been found in woods, living like brutes; but ſheep and geeſe have alſo been found in the ſame ſtate. This does not diſprove that geeſe and ſheep were deſtined to live in herds. Some Faquirs in India live all alone loaded with chains. Even ſo, and they live in this manner that paſſengers may admire them, and beſtow alms upon them. They perform, through a kind of vain fanaticiſm, what our beggars do, who lame themſelves to excite compaſſion. Theſe excrements of human ſociety are only proofs how far that ſociety may be abuſed.

It is very probable that men were in a ſtate of ruſticity for many thouſand ages, as an infinite number of peaſants are to this very hour. But man could not live like badgers and hares.

By what law, by what ſecret ties, by what inſtinct, could men always have lived like a family, without the aſſiſtance of art, and without having

yet formed a language? It muſt have been by their own nature, by the taſte, which prompts them to an union with females; by the attachment which an Icelander, a Laplander, or a Hottentot, feels for his mate, when the protuberance of her belly gives him hope of ſeeing born of his blood a being like himſelf; by the reciprocal aid which this man and this woman furniſh each other; by the love which nature inſpires them with for the little one as ſoon as he is born; by the habitual love they have for him; by the habitual obedience which the child neceſſarily pays to his father and mother; by the aſſiſtance which he gives them when he has attained his fifth or ſixth year; by the ſucceſſive children they produce; in a word, becauſe they ſee with pleaſure, in an advanced age, their ſons and daughters produce other children, who have the ſame inſtinct as their fathers and mothers.

I acknowlege this is a very unpoliſhed ſociety of men: but is it believed that the colliers in the foreſts of Germany, the inhabitants of the North, and a hundred different people of Africa, live at this very time in a manner that is extremely different?

What language will theſe ſavage and barbarous families ſpeak? they will, doubtleſs, be for a long time without ſpeaking: they will underſtand each other very well by ſounds and geſtures. All nations have thus been ſavages, taking the word in this ſenſe; that is to ſay, there muſt have been, for a great length of time, wandering families in foreſts, diſ-

puting their food with other animals, arming themſelves againſt them with ſtones and thick branches, feeding upon wild roots, fruits of various kinds, and at length even upon animals.

There is a mechanical inſtinct in man, which we ſee every day produces great effects in men of very confined intellects. We ſee machines invented by the inhabitants of the mountains of Tyrol and the Voſges, which aſtoniſh the learned. The moſt ignorant peaſant knows how to raiſe the heavieſt burdens by the aſſiſtance of the leaver, not doubting that equilibrium power is in the weight, as the diſtance from the point of ſupport to the weight, is at the ſame diſtance from this point of ſupport to the power. If it had been neceſſary that this knowlege ſhould have preceded the uſe of leavers, what a number of ages would have elapſed before a large ſtone could have been moved from its place!

Let it be propoſed to any children to jump over a ditch, they will all mechanically take their ſpring, by retiring a little backward, in order to have a run. They are certainly ignorant that their ſtrength is in this caſe the product of their maſs being multiplied by their ſwiftneſs

It is then evinced that nature only inſpires us with uſeful ideas, which precede all our reflexion. It is the ſame in morality. We are all poſſeſſed of two ſentiments, which form the baſis of ſociety, pity and juſtice. If a child ſhould ſee his likeneſs torn to pieces, he would be ſeized with ſudden agonies,

which he would teſtify by his cries and tears: and he would, if it were in his power, ſuccour the ſufferer.

Aſk a child who has had no education, who begins to ſpeak and reaſon, if the grain which a man has ſown in his field belongs to him, and if the robber, who has ſlain its proprietor, has a legal right to that grain: you will find whether the child does not reply in the ſame manner as would all the legiſlators of the earth.

God has implanted in us a principle of reaſon that is univerſal, as he has given feathers to birds and ſkins to bears; and this principle is ſo immutable, that it ſubſiſts in deſpight of all the paſſions which oppoſe it, in deſpight of thoſe tyrants who would drown it in blood, in deſpight of thoſe impoſtors who would annihilate it by ſuperſtition. It is for this reaſon, that the moſt unpoliſhed people conſtantly judge very well, in the end, of thoſe laws by which they are governed, becauſe they are ſenſible whether thoſe laws are agreeable or oppoſite to the principles of pity and juſtice, which are implanted in their hearts.

But before a numerous ſociety, a people, or a nation, can be formed, it is neceſſary that ſome language ſhould be eſtabliſhed: this is the greateſt difficulty to be ſurmounted. Without the gift of imitation, it would never have been overcome: they muſt doubtleſs have begun by ſounds, which muſt have expreſſed their firſt wants; afterwards the

moſt ingenious man, born with the moſt flexible organs, muſt have formed ſome articulations, which their children repeated, and their mothers muſt have particularly untied their tongues. Idioms in the firſt ſtate muſt have conſiſted of monoſyllables, being the moſt eaſy to form and retain.

We really find that the moſt ancient nations, who have preſerved any thing of their primitive tongue, ſtill expreſs, by monoſyllables, the moſt familiar things which moſt immediately ſtrike the ſenſes: Chineſe to this very hour is founded upon monoſyllables.

Conſult the ancient Tudeſc, and all the northern idioms, you will ſcarce find any uſeful thing in common, expreſſed by more than one articulation. It is all monoſyllables; *zon* the ſun, *moun* the moon, *zé* the ſea, *flus* a flood, *man* man, *hof* the head, *boum* a tree, *drink*, drink, *march* march, *ſhlaf*, ſleep, etc.

This brevity of expreſſion was uſed in the foreſts of Gaul and Germany and all the north. The Greeks and Romans had no words more compound, till a long time after they were united as a body of people.

But what wiſdom was neceſſary to diſtinguiſh the different ſenſes? how came we to expreſs the different gradations *I would*, *I ſhould have willed*, the poſitive things and thoſe that are conditional? It could only have happened among thoſe nations that were already moſt poliſhed, that by dint of time

they expreſſed with compound words, thoſe ſecret operations of the human mind; ſo we find among the Barbarians there are but two or three tenſes: the Hebrews made uſe of only the preſent and future tenſes. And after all, notwithſtanding all the efforts of man, no language comes near to perfection.

CHAP VIII.

Of America.

CAN it ſtill be aſked from whence came the men who peopled America? the ſame queſtion may be aſked with regard to the Terra Auſtralis. They are much farther diſtant from the port which Columbus ſat out from, than the Antilles. Men and beaſts have been found in all parts of the earth that are inhabitable; who placed them there? we have already anſwered he that cauſed the graſs to grow in the fields; and it is no more ſurpriſing to find men in America, than it is to find flies there.

It is pleaſant enough to read the jeſuit Lafiteau in his preface to the Hiſtory of the American Savages, where he ſays, that none but atheiſts can pretend to ſay that God created the Americans.

Maps of the ancient world are ſtill engraven, where America appears under the title of the Atlantic Iſland. The Cape Verd iſlands are there called

the Gorgades, and the Caribbees the Heſperides. This is only founded upon the diſcovery of the Canary Iſlands, and probably that of Madeira, whither the Phenicians and the Carthaginians ſailed; they are almoſt cloſe to Africa, and, perhaps, they were not ſo far diſtant from it formerly as they are at preſent.

Let father Lafiteau make the inhabitants of the Caribbees deſcend from Caria, by reaſon of the affinity of the name, and becauſe the women of both ſerved their huſbands for cooks; let him imagine that Caribbeans produce red children, and negro women black, becauſe their forefathers accuſtomed themſelves to paint their ſkins black or red.

It happened, ſays he, that the negro women obſerving their huſbands complexions painted black, their imaginations were ſo much ſtruck therewith, that their race ever after felt the effects of it. The ſame thing happened to the Caribbean women, who by the ſame ſtrength of imagination brought forth red children. He ſupports his argument with the example of Jacob's lambs, who were born with ſpotted ſkins, by the art of that patriarch, who put in their view branches of trees half peeled; theſe branches appearing, at ſome diſtance, of two different colours, communicated their colour to the lambs of this patriarch. But the jeſuit ſhould know that what happened in the time of Jacob does not happen now.

If Laban's kinſman had been aſked why his flocks, conſtantly ſeeing graſs, did not produce

green herbs, he would have been ſomewhat embarraſſed what to reply.

Lafiteau at length makes the Americans deſcend from the ancient Greeks, for which opinion he aſſigns the following reaſons. The Greeks had their fables, the Americans have alſo fables; the firſt Greeks went a hunting, the Americans alſo hunt; the firſt Greeks had oracles, the Americans have ſorcerers; there were dances performed at the feaſts of the Greeks, the Americans dance. It muſt be allowed that theſe are very convincing reaſons.

A reflection might be made upon the nations of the new world, which father Lafiteau has omitted, which is, that the people diſtant from the tropics have always been invincible; and that thoſe people who were neareſt the tropics have almoſt always been ſubdued by monarchs. It was for a long time the ſame in our continent; but we do not find that the people of Canada have ever attempted to ſubjugate Mexico, in the manner that the Tartars ſpread themſelves over Aſia and Europe. It ſhould ſeem that the Canadians were never ſufficiently numerous to detach colonies into other parts,

America in general could never have been ſo much peopled as Europe and Aſia; it is covered with vaſt marſhes, which render the air very unhealthy. Innumerable poiſons are the produce of the earth; arrows, ſteeped in the juice of theſe venomous herbs, always occaſion mortal wounds. Nature, in fine, had given the Americans much

leſs induſtry than the inhabitants of the ancient world: theſe cauſes united may have been greatly prejudicial to population.

Among the various phyſical obſervations which may be made upon this fourth part of our univerſe ſo long unknown, the moſt remarkable, perhaps, is that there is but one people who have any beards: theſe are the Eſquimaux; they are ſituated about the fifty-ſecond degree of northern latitude, where the cold is more intenſe than in ſixty-ſix degrees of our continent; their neighbours are all beardleſs. Here then are two races of men abſolutely different, bordering upon each other.

Towards the iſthmus of Panama is the race of the Dariens almoſt ſimilar to the Albinoes, who ſhun light, and vegetate in caverns, a feeble race, and conſequently not numerous.

The American lions are ſmall and fearful; the ſheep are large, and ſo vigorous, that they are uſed to carry burthens. All the lakes are at leaſt ten times as large as ours; in a word, the natural productions of the earth are not like thoſe of our hemiſphere. Thus are all things variegated, and that ſame providence which produced the elephant, the rhinoceros, and negroes, has given birth in other regions to orignans, contours, ſwine with navels upon their backs, and men with diſpoſitions quite different from ours.

CHAP. IX.

Of the THEOCRACY.

IT ſeems that the greater part of the ancient nations were governed by a kind of theocracy. To begin by India, you there find the Bramans have long been ſovereigns: in Perſia, the Magii have the greateſt authority. The ſtory of Smerdis's ears may very probably be a fable; but it will always follow that he was a magi upon the throne of Cyrus. Several Egyptian prieſts had ſo great a dominion over their kings, that they went ſo far as to preſcribe to them how much they ſhould eat and drink, brought up their children, tried them after their death, and often made themſelves kings.

If we come down to the Greeks, however fabulous their hiſtory may be, do we not learn therefrom that the prophet Calcas had ſufficient power in the army to ſacrifice the daughter of the king of kings? Come ſtill lower to the ſavage nations ſince the Greeks, the Druids governed the Gauls.

It does not ſeem to have been poſſible that in the firſt colonies, there could have been any other than a theocratic government; for as ſoon as a nation has choſen a tutelar god, this god has prieſts; theſe prieſts reign over the minds of the people, they cannot govern but in the name of God: they therefor

always make him ſpeak; they retail his oracles, and it is by an expreſs order from God, that every thing is performed.

Hence the ſacrifices of human blood, which have drenched almoſt all the earth. What father, what mother, would ever have abjured nature to that degree as to preſent their ſon or daughter to a prieſt, in order to be ſlain upon an altar, if they had not been certain that the god of their country had commanded the ſacrifice.

Theocracy did not only reign for a long time, but it extended tyranny to the moſt ſhocking exceſs that human falſhood can prevail; and the more this government was called divine, the more it became abominable.

Almoſt every people have ſacrificed their children to their gods; they therefore believed they received this unnatural mandate from the lips of thoſe gods whom they adored.

Among the people who are ſo improperly called civilized, I ſee ſcarce any but the Chineſe who have not been guilty of theſe ſhocking abſurdities. China is the only one of all the ancient ſtates which has not been under ſacerdotal ſubjection. As to the Japoneſe they ſubmitted to the laws impoſed upon them by a prieſt, ſix hundred years before we were in being. Almoſt every where theocracy is ſo much eſtabliſhed, ſo deeply rooted, that the firſt hiſtories are thoſe of gods themſelves, who became incarnated to come and govern men. The gods, ſaid the peo-

ple of Thebis and Memphis, have reigned twelve thouſand years in Ægypt. Brama incarnated himſelf to reign in India, Samonocodom at Siam, the god Adad governed Syria, the goddeſs Sybele had been ſovereign of Phrygia, Jupiter of Crete, Saturn of Greece and Italy. The ſame ſpirit runs through all theſe fables; it conſiſts in a confuſed idea which men had, that the gods formerly deſcended upon earth.

CHAP. X.

Of the Chaldeans.

THE moſt ancient poliſhed nations appear to me to have been the Chaldeans, the Indians, and the Chineſe. We have a certain epocha of the ſcience of the Chaldeans: it was in the year 1903 of celeſtial obſervations ſent from Babylon by Calliſthanus to the preceptor of Alexander. The aſtronomical tables form an exact retroſpect to the year 2234, before our vulgar æra. It is true that this epocha borders upon the time, when, according to the Vulgate, the Deluge took place. But let us not enter here into the depths of the different chronologies of the Vulgate, the Samaritan, and the Septuagint, which we equally revere. The univerſal deluge is a great miracle, which has no

connection with our inquiries. We are reaſoning here only according to natural opinions, conſtantly ſubmitting the weak feelings of our ſhallow underſtandings to the enlightenings of a ſuperior order.

Ancient authors, quoted by George Le Sincelle, ſay that in the time of a Chaldean king named Xixoutron, there happened a dreadful inundation. The Tiger and the Euphrates overflowed their banks, probably more than uſual. But the Chaldeans could not have known otherwiſe than by revelation, that ſuch a ſcourge had ſubmerged all the habitable world. Once more let it be obſerved, I conſider here only the uſual courſe of nature.

It is certain that the Chaldeans had not exiſted upon earth more than 1900 years before our æra: this ſhort ſpace would not have been ſufficient for them to diſcover the true ſyſtem of our univerſe; an amazing thought, which, however, the Chaldeans at length compaſſed. Ariſtadreus of Samos tells us that the ſages of Chaldea were acquainted with the impoſſibility of the earth's occupying the center of the planetary world, and that they had aſſigned the ſun this ſtation, which belonged to him; that they made the earth, and other planets, revolve round him, each in a different orb.

The progreſs of the mind is ſo ſlow, the illuſion of our eyes ſo powerful, the ſubmiſſion to received ideas ſo tyrannical, that it is not poſſible for a people who had exiſted only nineteen hundred years to

have arrived at that ſummit of philoſophy, which contradicts the ſight, and which requires the moſt profound theory. So did the Chaldeans reckon 470,000 years. Again, this knowlege of the true ſyſtem of the world, was not the lot but of a ſmall number of philoſophers. This is the fate of all great truths; and the Greeks, who came afterwards, adopted nothing but the common ſyſtem, which is the ſyſtem of children.

Four hundred and ſeventy thouſand years* ſound immenſe to us, who were born only yeſterday; but this is a very little time for the whole univerſe. I know that we cannot adopt this reckoning, that

* Our holy religion, ſo ſuperior in every thing to our underſtanding, teaches us that the world has been created only about ſix thouſand years, according to the Vulgate, or ſeven thouſand, according to the Septuagint. The interpreter of this ineffable religion teaches us that Adam had intuitive knowlege, and that all the arts were tranſmitted from Adam to Noah. If this is really the opinion of the church, we will adopt it with a firm and invariable faith, ſubmitting, moreover, all we write to the judgement of that holy church which is infallible. It is in vain that the emperor Julian, otherwiſe ſo reſpectable for his virtue, valour, and knowlege, ſays in his diſcourſe, cenſured by the great and moderate St. Cirille, that whether Adam had intuitive knowlege or not, God could not have forbid him to touch the tree of knowlege of right and wrong; that God, on the contrary, ſhould have commanded him to eat much of the fruit of this tree, in order to improve his intuitive knowlege, if he was poſſeſſed of it, or to acquire it, if he had it not. In a word, we conſtantly warn the reader, that we do not interfere in any reſpect with holy things. We proteſt againſt all erroneous interpretations, againſt all malicious inferences that may be adduced from our words.

Cicero made a joke of it, that it is extravagant, and moreover that we ſhould rather give credit to the Pentateuch, than to Sanchoniaton or Beroſus: but once more, it is impoſſible (humanly ſpeaking) that men ſhould in nineteen hundred years arrive at the knowlege of ſuch aſtoniſhing truths. The firſt of all arts is that of providing ſuſtenance, which formerly was more difficult for men than brutes; the ſecond, to form a language, which certainly requires a very conſiderable ſpace of time; the third, to build ſome huts; the fourth, to provide cloathing. Then the forging of iron, or the ſupplying the want of it; theſe require ſo many lucky incidents, ſo much induſtry, ſo many ages, that it is ſurpriſing how men could any way compaſs them. What a leap from this ſtate to aſtronomy!

The Chaldeans for a long time engraved their obſervations and their laws upon bricks in hieroglyphics: theſe were ſpeaking characters, a cuſtom which the Ægyptians acquired after ſeveral ages had elapſed. The art of tranſmitting ideas, by alphabetical characters, could not have been invented but very late in that part of Aſia.

It may be ſuppoſed that when the Chaldeans built cities, they began to make uſe of the alphabet. How did they do before? Will it be anſwered, as we do in our village, and in twenty thouſand other villages of the world, where no one can either write or read, and where, nevertheleſs, people under-

ſtand each other very well, where all the neceſſary arts are cultivated, and even ſometimes with genius?

Babylon was probably a very ancient hamlet, before it was formed into an immenſe and ſuperb city. But who built this city? was it Belus? was it Nabonaſſar? There never was in Aſia any woman called Semarimis, nor any man called Belus. It is like our giving to Greek cities the names of Armagnac and Abbeville. The Greeks, who changed all the barbarous terminations into Greek words, tranſmogrified all the Aſiatic names. Moreover, the hiſtory of Semarimis reſembles in all reſpects an oriental tale.

Nabonaſſar, or rather Nabon-aſſor, was probably the perſon who embelliſhed and fortified Babylon, and at length rendered it ſo ſuperb a city. He was a real monarch, known in Aſia by the æra which bears his name. This inconteſtible æra did not begin till 1747 years before our own; ſo that it is very modern, when compared to the number of ages neceſſary to have eſtabliſhed great dominions. It appears even by the name of Babylon, that it exiſted long before Nabonaſſar. It was the city of father Bel. Bab in Chaldean ſignifies father, as Herbelot acknowleges; Bel is the name of the Lord. The Orientals never knew it by any other name than Babel, the city of the Lord, the city of God, or according to others the door of God.

Neither was there ſuch a perſon as Ninus the founder of Ninvah, which we call Nineva, any

more than Belus the founder of Babylon. Never did the name of any Aſiatic prince terminate in *us*.

The circumference of Babylon might have been twenty four of our middling leagues; but that one Ninus ſhould have erected upon the Tyger at the diſtance of only forty leagues from Babylon, a city named Nineva, of ſo great an extent, is what does not ſeem credible. Three powerful empires are ſaid to have exiſted at the ſame time; namely, that of Babylon, that of Aſſyria, or Nineva, and that of Syria or Damaſcus: this has very little the air of probability: it is like ſaying that there were at the ſame time in a part of Gaul three powerful empires, the capitals of which were Paris, Soiſſons, and Orleans, each being twenty-four leagues in circumference. Beſides, Nineva was not built, or at leaſt was of very little importance at the time when it is ſaid that the prophet Jonas was appointed to exhort the people to perform penance, and was ſwallowed up in his way by a fiſh, which kept him in his belly three nights and three days.

The imaginary empire of Aſſyria was not yet in exiſtence at the time that Jonas is introduced; for he propheſied, it is ſaid, under the Melk or Jewiſh viceroy Joas; and Phul, who is looked upon in the Hebrew books as the firſt king of Aſſyria, did not reign, according to them, till about fifty-two years after the death of Joas. By confronting the dates in this manner, contradictions are every where diſcovered, and uncertainty neceſſarily follows.

I acknowlege I do not comprehend any thing a-

bout the two empires of Babylon and Aſſyria. Several ſages, who were deſirous of throwing ſome light upon theſe obſcurities, have affirmed that Aſſyria and Chaldea were one and the ſame empire, ſometimes governed by two princes, one reſiding at Babylon, the other at Nineva; and this reaſonable opinion may be adopted, till ſuch time as we diſcover one ſtill more reaſonable.

What contributes to give great probability to the antiquity of this nation, is that famous tower erected to obſerve the planetary world. Almoſt all the commentators, unable to diſpute the exiſtence of this monument, think themſelves obliged to ſuppoſe that it was the remains of the tower of Babel, which men wanted to erect unto heaven. What the commentators mean by heaven is not very evident: is it the moon? is it the planet Venus?—They are very diſtant from us.

Be this as it may, if Nebonaſſer erected this edifice to ſerve for an obſervatory, it muſt at leaſt be acknowleged that the Chaldeans had an obſervatory upwards of 2400 years before us. Let us now conſider how many centuries were neceſſary for the ſlowneſs of human wit, to arrive at that pitch, which the erection of ſuch a monument to the ſciences muſt require.

The zodiac was invented in Chaldea, and not in Ægypt. There appears to me three teſtimonies of weight: the firſt is, that the Chaldeans were an enlightened people, before Ægypt, ever inundated by the Nile, could have been habitable; the ſecond,

that the ſigns of the zodiac correſpond with the climate of Meſopotamia, and not with that of Ægypt. The Ægyptians could not have the ſign of the bull in the month of April, ſince they do not work in this ſeaſon: they could not in the month which we call Auguſt figure a ſign by a maid laden with heads of corn, as their harveſt is not at this time. They could not repreſent January by a pitcher of water, as it ſeldom rained in Ægypt, and never in the month of January. The third reaſon is, that the ancient ſigns of the Chaldean zodiac were one of the articles of their religion. They were governed by twelve ſecondary gods, twelve mediating gods; each of them preſiding over a conſtellation, as we are told by Diodorus Siculus (lib. 2.) The religion of the ancient Chaldeans was Sabiſm, that is to ſay, the adoration of the ſupreme God, and the veneration of the ſtars, and the celeſtial intelligences which preſide over the ſtars. When they prayed, they turned themſelves toward the northern ſtar: ſo much analogy had their worſhip to aſtronomy.

Vitruvius in his ninth book, where he treats of ſolar quadrants, of the elevation of the ſun, of the length of ſhadows, of the reflected light of the moon, conſtantly quotes the ancient Chaldeans, and not the Ægyptians. This ſeems to me a proof ſufficiently ſtrong, that Chaldea and not Ægypt, was conſidered as the cradle of that ſcience; ſo that nothing is truer than that old Latin proverb

Tradidit Ægyptis Babylon Ægyptis Achivis.

CHAP. XI.

Of the Babylonians become Persians.

THE Perſians were ſituated to the Eaſt of Babylon. They carried their arms and religion to Babylon, when Koreſh, whom we call Cyrus, took that city, with the aſſiſtance of the Medes, who were eſtabliſhed to the northward of Perſia. We have two capital fables relating to Cyrus, that of Herodotus and that of Xenophon, which are in every reſpect contradictory, and which, nevertheleſs, a thouſand different writers have copied.

Herodotus ſuppoſes a king of the Medes, that is to ſay, a king of Hyrcania, whom he calls Aſtyagus, a name derived from the Greek. This Hyrcanian Aſtyagus orders his grandſon Cyrus to be drowned in his cradle, becauſe he ſaw in his dream his daughter Mandane, mother to Cyrus, urine ſo copiouſly, that ſhe inundated all Aſia. The reſt of this adventure is nearly in the ſame ſtyle; this is a hiſtory of Gargantua, ſeriouſly written.

Xenophon makes the life of Cyrus a moral romance, nearly reſembling our Telemachus. He begins by ſuppoſing, in order to recommend the maſculine and robuſt education of his hero, that the Medes were voluptuaries ſunk in effeminacy. Some inhabitants of Hircania, whom the Tartars then cal-

led the Scythians, had committed ravages for thirty years—were theſe Sibarites?

All that can be poſitively averred with reſpect to Cyrus, is that he was a great conqueror, and conſequently a ſcourge of the earth. The baſis of his hiſtory is very true: the epiſodes are fabulous: all hiſtories are the ſame.

Rome exiſted in the time of Cyrus: her territories extended between four and five leagues, and ſhe pillaged, as much as poſſible, her neighbours; but I would not ſupport the battle of three Horatius's, the adventure of Lucretia, the bucklers deſcending from Heaven, nor the ſtone being cut with a razor. There were Jewiſh ſlaves in Babylon and elſewhere; but, humanly ſpeaking, one might doubt that the angel Raphael had come down from Heaven to conduct young Tobit on foot towards Hircania, in order to receive ſome money, and to drive away the devil Aſmodeus with the ſmoke of a pipe.

I ſhall take care not to touch upon the romance of Herodotus, or that of Xenophon, with reſpect to the life of Cyrus; but I ſhall obſerve that the Parſis, or Perſians, pretended to have among them for 6000 years, an ancient Zerduſt, a prophet who had taught them to be juſt, and to revere the ſun, as the ancient Chaldeans had revered the ſtars whilſt they gazed upon them.

I ſhall take care not to affirm that theſe Perſians and theſe Chaldeans were ſo juſt, or that I know ſo

preciſely at what time came their ſecond Zerduſt, who rectified the worſhip of the ſun, and taught them to adore only the God, author of the ſun and the ſtars. He wrote, or rather commented upon, as it is ſaid, the book of the Zend, which the Perſians diſperſed over Aſia, now revered as their Bible: this book is, perhaps, the oldeſt in the world, after that of the five kings of the Chineſe; it is written in the ancient ſacred language of the Chaldeans; and Mr. Hyde, who has given us a tranſlation of the Sadder, would have procured us that of the Zend, had he been able to defray the expence of ſuch a ſearch. I mean at leaſt the Sadder, that extract of the Zend which is the catechiſm of the Perſians. I there find that theſe Perſians believed, for a long ſeries of time, a god, a devil, a reſurrection, a paradiſe, a hell. They were, without contradiction, the firſt who framed theſe ideas: this was the moſt antique ſyſtem, and which was not adopted by other nations, till after many ages; ſince the Phariſees among the Jews did not ſtrongly maintain the immortality of the ſoul, and the dogma of rewards and puniſhments after death, till about the time of Herod.

This, perhaps, is the moſt important circumſtance in the ancient hiſtory of the world. Here is an uſeful religion eſtabliſhed upon the dogma of the immortality of the ſoul, and upon a knowlege of the creative Being. Let us continue to obſerve how many degrees are neceſſary for the human under-

ſtanding to paſs through, in order to conceive ſuch a ſyſtem. Obſerve again that baptiſm and immerſion into water, to purify the ſoul by the body, is one of the precepts of the Zend. (p. 251.)

The origin of all rites is, perhaps, derived from the Perſians and Chaldeans, and extended to the extremities of the weſt.

I ſhall not enter into an enquiry here, why and how the Babylonians had their ſecondary gods in acknowleging a ſovereign god This ſyſtem, or rather this chaos, was that of all nations, except the tribunals of China. We every where find extreme folly united to a little wiſdom in the laws, the worſhips, and cuſtoms; mankind is led more by inſtinct than reaſon; the divinity is every where adored and diſhonoured. The Perſians revered ſtatues as ſoon as they could procure ſculptors: but even in theſe figures the ſymbols of immortality are diſcovered; we ſee heads ſoaring with wings to heaven, ſymbols of the emigration of a tranſitory life to that of immortality.

Let us now obſerve thoſe cuſtoms, which are entirely human. I am aſtoniſhed that Herodotus ſhould ſay before all Greece, in his firſt book, that all the Babylonian women were compelled by the law to proſtitute themſelves once at leaſt in their life to ſtrangers, in the temple of Milita, or Venus. I am ſtill more aſtoniſhed that in all the hiſtories which are compiled for the inſtruction of youth, this ſame tale is conſtantly preſerved. This cer-

tainly muſt have been an elegant feſtival, a curious devotion, to ſee the dealers in camels, horſes, oxen, and aſſes, repairing to church, and there deſcend to lie before the altar with the principal ladies of the city. Could ſuch enormities be really practiſed by a people who were eſteemed poliſhed? Is it poſſible that the magiſtrates of one of the greateſt cities of the world ſhould frame ſuch a police? that the huſbands ſhould conſent to proſtitute their wives? that the fathers ſhould abandon their daughters to the grooms of Aſia? What is not in nature can never be true; I would as ſoon believe Dion. Caſſius, who avers that the grave ſenators of Rome debated upon a decree, whereby Cæſar, at the age of 57 years, ſhould be allowed the privilege of enjoying all the women he choſe.

Should not thoſe who are at preſent employed in compiling ancient hiſtory, and copy ſo many authors without examining any of them, have perceived that either Herodotus related fables, or rather that his text was corrupted, and that he only meant thoſe courtezans who are ſettled in all great cities, and who even waited for paſſengers upon the roads.

I ſhall give no more credit to Sextus Empiricus, who pretends that pederaſty was ordered among the Perſians. What a pity! how can it be ſuggeſted that a law was enacted by men, the execution of which would have deſtroyed the human race? Pederaſty was, on the contrary, expreſly forbidden in

the book of Zend, which may be ſeen in the abrigement of the Sadder, where it is ſaid, (port 9) "That there is no greater ſin."

Strabo ſays that the Perſians married their mothers:—but what vouchers does he produce? hearſays and idle reports: theſe may furniſh an epigram for Catullus. *Num magus ex matre et nato naſcatur oportet* Every magus is to be born from the inceſtuous intercourſe of a mother and her ſon. Such a law is incredible; an epigram is no proof. If there had been no mothers inclinable to lie with their ſons, there would conſequently have been no prieſts among the Perſians. The religion of the magii, the great object of which was population, ſhould rather have allowed fathers to cohabit with their daughters, than for mothers to have laid with their ſons, as an old man might have begot ſomething, but an old woman was debarred this advantage.

In a word, when we read hiſtory, we ſhould conſtantly be upon our guard not to adopt fables.

CHAP. XII.

Of SYRIA.

BY all the monuments which remain for our inſpection, I find that the country which extends from Alexandretta or Scauderoon, as far as Bagdat, was always called Syria; the alphabet uſed

by this people was always Syriac: that the ancient cities of Zobah, Balbec, and Damaſcus, were here ſituated, and afterwards thoſe of Antiochus, Seleucia, and Palmyra. Balk was ſo ancient, that the Perſians pretend that their Bram or Abraham came from Balk amongſt them: where then could that ancient empire of Aſſyria, of which ſo much has been ſaid, be ſituated, if it was not in the land of fables?

The Gauls at one time extended themſelves as far as the Rhine; at other times, they were more confined; but who could ever think of placing a vaſt empire between the Rhine and the Gauls? Or that the nations bordering upon the Euphrates were called Aſſyrians, when they extended themſelves towards Damaſcus; and the people of Syria were called Aſſyrians, when they approached the Euphrates? the difficulty may be reduced to the diſcuſſion of this ſingle point. All the neighbouring nations have intermingled; they were each of them at war and exchanged their limits. But when once capital cities are erected, theſe cities eſtabliſh a certain diſtinction between the two nations. Thus the Babylonians, whether conquerors or conquered, were alway a different people from that of Syria: the ancient characters of the Syriac language were not the ſame with thoſe of the ancient Chaldeans.

The worſhip, the ſuperſtition, the laws, whether good or bad, the extravagant cuſtoms, were none of them ſimilar. The goddeſs of Syria of ſuch great antiquity was no way related to the worſhip of the

Chaldeans. The magii of the Chaldeans, the Babylonians and the Perſians, never made themſelves eunuchs, as did the prieſts of the goddeſs of Syria; what a ſtrange oppoſition! the Syrians revered the figure of the god whom we call Priapus, and the prieſts diſpoſſeſſed themſelves of their virility!

Does not this renunciation to generation evince great antiquity—conſiderable population? It is impoſſible that ſuch attacks ſhould be made upon nature in a country where the ſpecies was ſcarce.

The prieſts of Cybele in Phrygia made themſelves eunuchs in the ſame manner as thoſe of Syria. Once more, can it be doubted that this was not the effect of ancient cuſtom for men to ſacrifice to the gods what was the deareſt to them, and not to expoſe themſelves before beings whom they thought pure, to accidents which they judged were impure? Is it aſtoniſhing after ſuch ſacrifices, that among other people a ſacrifice ſhould be made of the prepuce; or that among ſome of the African nations, they ſhould in the ſame manner offer up a teſticle? The fables of Atis and Combalus are mere fables, like that of Jupiter, who made a eunuch of his father Saturn: ſuperſtition gives birth to ridiculous cuſtoms, and the ſpirit of romance aſcribes a thouſand abſurd reaſons for them.

What I ſhall farther obſerve of the ancient Syrians, is that the city which has ſince been called the holy city, and by the Greeks Hierapolis, was by the Syrians named Magog. The word Mag

has a great affinity with the ancient magii; it ſeems to have been in common applied to all thoſe who were in thoſe climates conſecrated to the ſervice of the divinity: every people had a holy city. We know that Thebes in Ægypt was the city of god; Babylon was the city of god; and Apameus in Phrygia was alſo the city of god.

The Hebrews, a long time after, make mention of the people of Gog and Magog; they might by theſe names ſignify the people of the Euphrates and the Orontes; they might alſo ſignify the Scythians, who ravaged Aſia before the time of Cyrus, and who made devaſtations in Phenicia. But it is of little importance to know what idea a Jew framed to himſelf when he uttered the words Gog or Magog.

I do not, in other reſpects, heſitate believing that the Syrians were much more ancient than the Ægyptians, for this evident reaſon, that the lands, which are moſt eaſily cultivated, are neceſſarily the firſt peopled, and the earlieſt in a flouriſhing ſtate.

CHAP XIII.

Of the PHENICIANS, and of SANCHONATION.

THE Phenicians were probably united as a body of people, as early as the other inhabitants of Syria. They may not be ſo ancient as the Chaldeans, becauſe their country is not ſo fertile:

Sidon, Tyre, Joppa, Berith, and Aſcalon, are barren lands. Maritime trade has conſtantly been the laſt reſource of every people. They began by cultivating their land before they built ſhips, to go in ſearch of other countries beyond ſea. But thoſe who are compelled to yield to maritime trade are ſoon poſſeſſed of that induſtry, the daughter of neceſſity, which does not animate other nations. There is no mention made of any maritime expeditions, either among the Chaldeans or the Indians. Even the Ægyptians looked with horror upon the ſea; the ſea was their Typhon, an evil-diſpoſed being; and this makes the four hundred ſhips that were fitted out by Seſoſtris for the conqueſt of India, very queſtionable; but the enterpriſes of the Phenicians are real. Carthage and Cadiz founded by them, the diſcovery of England, their trade to India conducted by Eziongaber, their manufactures of valuable ſtuffs, their art of dying purple, teſtify their abilities, and thoſe abilities cauſed their grandeur.

The Phenicians were with reſpect to antiquity, what the Venetians were in the fifteenth century, and what the Dutch have ſince been, compelled to enrich themſelves by induſtry.

Commerce neceſſarily required regiſters, which ſupplied the place of our account books, with eaſy and laſting ſigns to fix thoſe regiſters. The opinion, which ſuppoſes that the Phenicians were the authors of the written alphabet, is therefor very probable.

I ſhall not aver that they invented ſuch characters before the Chaldeans; but their alphabet was certainly the moſt complete and uſeful, as they expreſſed the vowels, which the Chaldeans did not. The word Alphabet itſelf, compoſed of their two firſt characters, is an evidence in favour of the Phenicians.

I do not find that the Ægyptians ever communicated their letters or their language to any other people: on the other hand, the Phenicians imparted their language and their alphabet to the Carthaginians, who afterwards changed them. Their letters were transformed into thoſe of the Greeks; what a prejudice in favour of the antiquity of the Phenicians!

Sanchoniaton, the Phenician, who wrote, long before the Trojan war, the hiſtory of the firſt ages, ſome of whoſe fragments, tranſlated by Euſebius, have been handed down to us by Philo de Biblos; Sanchoniaton, I ſay, informs us that the Phenicians had ſacrificed from time immemorial to the elements and the winds; this indeed agrees with the diſpoſitions of a maritime people. He was deſirous in his hiſtory to trace things to their origin, like all the primitive writers: he was animated with the ſame ambition as the authors of the Zend and the Nedam, the ſame ambition as Manethon in Ægypt, and Heſiod in Greece.

What proves the prodigious antiquity of the book of Sanchoniaton is, that the firſt lines of it

were read in the celebration of the myſteries of Iſis and Ceres, a homage which the Ægyptians and Greeks would not have paid to a foreign author, if he had not been conſidered as one of the firſt ſources of human knowlege.

Sanchoniaton wrote nothing of himſelf; he conſulted all the ancient archives, and particularly the prieſt Jerombal. The name of Sanchoniaton ſignifies, in the ancient Phenician, *A lover of truth.* Porphyrus, Theodoret, and Euſebius, acknowlege it. Phenicia was called the country of the Archives, Kirjath Sepher. When the Hebrews ſettled in a part of this country, they gave him this teſtimony, as we find in Joſhua and the book of Judges.

Jerombal, whom Sanchoniaton conſulted, was a prieſt of the ſupreme God, whom the Phenicians named Jaho, Jehovah, a reputed ſacred name, adopted by the Ægyptians, and afterwards by the Jews. We find by the fragments of this monument, which is of ſuch antiquity, that Tyre had for a great length of time exiſted, though it was not yet become a powerful city.

The word El, which ſignified god among the firſt Phenicians, has ſome analogy to the Alla of the Arabians; and it is probable, that the Greeks compoſed their Elios from this monoſyllable El. But what is moſt obſervable, is, that we find the ancient Phenicians had the word Eloa, Eloim, which

the Hebrews for a very long time afterwards retained, when they ſettled in Canaan.

The Jews derived all the names they gave to God, Eloa, Iaho, Adonaï, from Phenicia: this cannot be otherwiſe, as the Jews in Canaan did not for a great while ſpeak any thing but the Phenician tongue.

The word Iaho, that ineffable word with the Jews, and which they never pronounced, was ſo common in the eaſt, that Diodorus in his ſecond book, ſpeaking of thoſe who feigned converſations with the gods, ſays, that "Minos boaſted of having communed with the god Zeus, Zamolxis with "the goddeſs Veſta, and the Jew Moſes with the "god Iaho, etc.

What deſerves particular obſervation, is that Sanchoniaton, in relating the ancient coſmology of his country, ſpeaks at firſt of the chaos enveloped in dark air, *chaut ereb*. Erebus, Heſiod's night, is derived from the Phenician word, which the Greeks preſerved. From chaos came Muth, or Moth, which ſignified matter; now, who diſcovered this matter? It was Colpi Jaho, the ſpirit of God, or rather the mouth of God, the voice of God. By the voice of God animals and men were created.

We may eaſily be convinced that this coſmogony is the origin of almoſt all the others. The more ancient people are always imitated by thoſe who ſucceed them; they acquire their language, they follow part of their rites, and they adopt their antiquities and fables. I am ſenſible how obſcure are

all the origins of the Chaldeans, the Syrians, the Phenicians, the Ægyptians, and the Greeks. What origin is not ſo? we can know nothing certain concerning the formation of the world, but what the Creator of the world has deigned to teach us himſelf. We talk with ſecurity, till we reach certain limits; we know that Babylon exiſted before Rome; that the cities of Syria were powerful before Jeruſalem was known; that there were kings of Ægypt before Jacob or Abraham: we know what ſocieties have been the laſt eſtabliſhed; but to know with preciſion which was the firſt people, a revelation is abſolutely neceſſary.

We are at leaſt allowed to weigh probabilities, and to make uſe of our reaſon in what does not relate to our ſacred dogmas, which are ſuperior to all reaſon.

It is very ſtrongly atteſted that the Phenicians inhabited for a long time their country, before the Hebrews made their appearance there. Could the Hebrews learn the Phenician tongue when they were wandering at a diſtance from Phenicia, in the deſert, in the midſt of ſome Arabian bands?

Could the Phenician tongue have become the common language of the Hebrews, and could they have written in that language in the time of Joſhua, when they had been for a long while in a ſtate of bondage, in the very country they had ſacked and burnt; did they not then acquire ſome ſmall knowlege of the language of their maſters, as they did

a little of the Chaldean, when they were ſlaves at Babylon?

Is it not highly probable that a trading, induſtrious, and learned people, ſettled from time immemorial, and who were the reputed inventors of letters, ſhould write long before a wandering people, newly ſettled in their neighbourhood, without any knowlege, without any induſtry, without any trade, ſubſiſting ſolely by rapine?

Can the authenticity of Sanchoniaton preſerved by Euſebius be ſeriouſly denied? or can it be imagined with the learned Huet that Sanchoniaton borrowed from Moſes? When all the remains of the monuments of antiquity intimate that Sanchoniaton lived about the time of Moſes, nothing can be determined; the intelligent and judicious reader is to decide between Huet, and Vandale who refuted him. We are in ſearch of truth and not diſputation.

CHAP XIV.

Of the Scythians and Gomerians.

LET us leave Gomer juſt after coming out of the arch to go and ſubjugate Gaul, and in a few years people it: let us leave Tubal to go into Spain, and Magog into the north of Germany, about the time that the ſon of Cham produced an

amazing number of children completely black, towards Guinea and Congo. Theſe diſguſting impertinences have been obtruded in ſo many books, that they are not worth mentioning; children begin to ridicule them. But by what weakneſs, or by what ſecret malignity, or by what affectation to diſplay ill placed eloquence, have ſo many hiſtorians made ſuch great elogiums upon the Scythians, whom they knew nothing of?

Why does Quintus Curtius, in talking of the Scythians, who were ſituated to the north of Sogdia, beyond the Oxus (which he miſtakes for the Tanais, fifty leagues diſtant) why, I ſay, did Quintus Curtius put a philoſophical harangue into the mouth of thoſe Barbarians? why does he imagine that they reproached Alexander with his thirſt of conqueſt? why does he make them ſay, that Alexander is the moſt famous robber upon the earth, thoſe who had practiſed rapine all over Aſia, ſo long before him? why, in fine, does Quintus Curtius repreſent theſe Scythians as the juſteſt of men? The reaſon is, that placing the Tanais towards the Caſpian ſea, like a bad geographer, he ſpeaks declamatorily of the ſuppoſed diſintereſtedneſs of the Scythians.

If Horace, in contraſting the manner of the Scythians to thoſe of the Romans, gives an harmonious panegyric upon thoſe barbarians: if he ſays,

Campeſtreo milias Scithæ
Quorum plauſtra vagas rite trahunt domos
Vivunt et rigidi Getæ;

Happy the Scythians, houſeleſs train!
Who roll their vagrant dwellings o'er the plain;
Happy the Getes, fierce and brave;

it is that Horace ſpeaks as a poet ſomewhat ſatyrical, who is willing to honour ſtrangers at the expence of his own country.

For the ſame reaſon Tacitus exhauſts himſelf in the praiſe of the barbarous Germans, who pillaged the Gauls, and immolated men to their abominable Gods. Tacitus, Quintus Curtius, and Horace, are like thoſe pedagogues, who, in order to excite an emulation in their diſciples, are laviſh of their praiſes before them of ſtrange children, however unworthy of their applauſe.

The Scythians are thoſe ſame Barbarians, whom we have ſince called Tartars: they are the ſame who long before Alexander repeatedly ravaged Aſia, and have been the depredators of a great part of the continent. At one time bearing the name of Monguls or Huns, they ſubjected China and Judea; at another, under the name of Turks, they drove out the Arabs, who had conquered part of Aſia. From theſe extenſive plains the Huns went forth in order to reach Rome. Theſe are the diſintereſted and juſt men, whoſe equity our compilers ſo highly celebrate when they copy Quintus Curtius. In this manner are we peſtered with ancient hiſtories, without choice and without judgment: they are read with nearly the ſame kind of taſte as they are written,

and the natural offspring of this ſort of erudition muſt be error.

The Ruſſians at this time inhabit the ancient European Scythia: this people have furniſhed hiſtory with ſome very aſtoniſhing facts. There have been revolutions upon earth that have more ſtruck the imagination; but there are none that give ſo much ſatisfaction to the human mind, and do it ſo much honor as this. Conquerors and devaſtations have made their appearance; but that a ſingle man ſhould, in the courſe of twenty years, change the manners, the laws, and the ſentiments of the greateſt empire upon earth; that all the arts ſhould have flocked together to embelliſh deſerts, is really worthy of admiration. A woman, who could neither read nor write, brought to perfection the work which Peter began; another woman, named Elizabeth, extended ſtill farther thoſe noble eſſays. Another empreſs has gone beyond either of the two former; her ſubjects have imbibed her genius; the revolutions of the palace have not retarded a ſingle moment the progreſs of the empire towards felicity. In a word, half a century has more enlightened the court of Scythia, than ever were Greece or Rome.

CHAP. XV.

Of Arabia.

THOSE who are curious about ſuch monuments as thoſe of Ægypt, need not, I imagine, go in ſearch of them to Arabia. Mecca, it is ſaid, was built about the time of Abraham; but it is ſituated in ſo ſandy and barren a ſoil, that it does not appear this city could have been ſettled before thoſe which were founded near rivers in fertile countries. Above half of Arabia is a vaſt deſert, either ſandy or ſtony; but Arabia Felix deſerved that name, as, being ſurrounded with thick woods and a tempeſtuous ſea, it was ſheltered from the rapacity of robbers, who, till the time of Mahomet, were called conquerors; or rather, as it was the boundaries of his victories. This advantage is far above its aromatics, its incenſe, its cinnamon (which is middling) or even its coffee, which now creates its riches.

Arabia Deſerta is that unhappy country inhabited by ſome Amalekites, Moabites, and Midianites; a ſhocking country, which does not now contain above nine or ten thouſand wandering Arabian robbers, and which could not furniſh ſubſiſtance for more. It was in theſe deſerts that, it is ſaid, two

millions of Hebrews remained for forty years. This is not the true Arabia; and this country is often called the deſert of Syria.

Arabia Petræa is thus called only from the name of Petra, a ſmall fortreſs, to which the Arabs certainly did not give this name, but which received it from the Greeks, about the time of Alexander. This Arabia Petræa is very ſmall, and may, without doing it prejudice, be confounded with Arabia Deſerta: they have each been conſtantly inhabited by bands of vagabonds.

As to that extenſive part called Happy, half of it conſiſts alſo in deſerts; but upon advancing ſome miles into the interior parts, either to the eaſt of Moca, or to the eaſt of Mecca, there is found the moſt pleaſant country in the world. The air is continually perfumed, during a perpetual ſummer, by the odure of the aromatic plants which nature ſpontaneouſly produces. Thouſands of ſtreams flow from the mountains, and preſerve an inceſſant coolneſs, which moderates the heat of the ſun beneath ever-green ſhades.

It was particularly in this country, that the words garden and paradiſe implied celeſtial favour.

The gardens of Saana, towards Aden, were more famous among the Arabians, than were thoſe of Alcinous among the Greeks. And this Aden or Eden was called the ſpot of Delight: an ancient Shedad is ſtill ſpoken of, whoſe gardens were not in leſs

renown. Shade in thoſe ſcorching climates was conſidered as happineſs.

This vaſt country of Yemen is ſo fine, its ports are ſo happily ſituated upon the Indian ocean, that it is ſaid Alexander was deſirous of conquering Yemen, in order to make it the ſeat of his empire, and the emporium of trade for the whole world. He would have preſerved the ancient canal of the kings of Ægypt, which joined the Nile to the Red Sea; and all the treaſures of India would have been tranſplanted from Aden or Eden, to his city of Alexandria. Such an enterpriſe bears no reſemblance to thoſe inſipid and abſurd fables with which all ancient hiſtory is replete. He muſt indeed have ſubjugated all Arabia: if any one could have done it, Alexander muſt have been he. But it ſeems that this people did not fear him; they did not even ſend deputies to him, when Ægypt and Perſia had ſubmitted to his yoke.

The Arabians, whoſe defence are their deſerts and their courage, have never ſubmitted to a foreign yoke. Trajan conquered only a ſmall part of Arabia Petræa: they to this time brave the power of the Turk. This great people have always been as free as Scythians, and more civilized.

Care ſhould be taken not to confound thoſe ancient Arabs with that banditti, who ſaid they were deſcended from Iſhmael. The Iſhmaelites or Agareans, or thoſe who called themſelves the children

of Cethura, were foreign tribes, who never ſet foot in Arabia Felix. Their bands wandered in Arabia Petræa towards the country of Madian; they afterwards intermingled with the true Arabians in the time of Mahomet, when they embraced his religion.

Thoſe may be properly called the people of Arabia, who were the real aborigines, that is to ſay, who from time immemorial inhabited this fine country without intermixing with any other nation, without having ever been conquered or conquerors. Their religion was the moſt natural and ſimple of any; it conſiſted in worſhipping a god, and venerating the ſtars, which ſeemed, under ſo fine and clear a ſky, to ſet forth the grandeur of God, with more magnificence than any other part of nature. They conſidered the planets as mediators between God and men: they followed this religion till the time of Mahomet. I believe they were addicted to many ſuperſtitions, as they were men; but detached from the reſt of the world by ſeas and deſerts, in the poſſeſſion of a delicious country, above every want and fear, they muſt neceſſarily have been leſs prone to wickedneſs, and not ſo ſuperſtitious as other nations.

They were never known to invade the property of their neighbours, like famiſhed carnivorous animals; nor to devour the weak, under pretence of divine ordonnances; nor to pay their court to the powerful, by flattering them with falſe oracles.

Their ſuperſtition was neither abſurd nor barbarous.

They are not mentioned in our univerſal hiſtories, fabricated in our weſtern part of the globe. I really believe they had no connexion with that little Jewiſh nation, which is become the object and foundation of our pretended univerſal hiſtories, wherein a certain kind of authors copy one from the other, whilſt they all forget three fourths of the earth.

CHAP. XVI.

Of Bram, Abram, or Abraham.

IT ſeems that the name of Bram, Abram, Abraham, or Ibrahim, was one of the moſt common names with the ancient people of Aſia. The Indians, whom we look upon as one of the firſt nations, make their Brama a ſon of God, who taught the Bramins the manner of adoring him. This name came gradually into veneration. The Arabians, the Chaldeans, the Perſians, all uſed it, and the Jews looked upon him as one of their patriarchs. The Arabs, who traded with the Indians, were perhaps the firſt who had ſome confuſed idea of Brama, whom they called Abrama, and from whom they afterwards boaſted of being deſcended. The Chaldeans adopted him as a legiſlator; the Perſians called their ancient religion, Millat Ibrahim; the

Medes, Kiſh Ibrahim. They ſuppoſed that this Ibrahim, or Abraham, was born in Bactria, and that he reſided near the city Balk; they revered in him a prophet of the religion of ancient Zoroaſter: he belonged doubtleſs, only to the Hebrews, as they acknowlege him for their father in their ſacred books.

Some of the learned have thought that it was an Indian name, becauſe the Indian prieſts called themſelves Bramins or Brachmanes; and that ſeveral of their ſacred inſtitutions have an immediate affinity with this name: whereas, among the weſtern Aſiatics no inſtitution can be traced, which derives its name from Abram or Abraham. There never was any Abramic ſociety; no rite or ceremony of this name: but as the Jewiſh books ſay that Abraham was the ſtock of the Hebrew race, they ſhould be credited without heſitation.

The Alcoran quotes the Arabian hiſtories, with regard to Abraham, but very little is ſaid about him: according to thoſe hiſtorians, he was the founder of Mecca.

The Jews make him come from Chaldea, and not from India or Bactria; they were in the neighbourhood of Chaldea; India and Bactria were unknown to them: Abraham was a ſtranger to all theſe people, and Chaldea being a country long famed for arts and ſciences, it was an honor, humanly ſpeaking, for a ſmall nation, incloſed in Pa-

leſtine, to reckon among the number of their anceſtors an ancient ſage, a reputed Chaldean.

If it be allowable to examine the hiſtorical part of the Judaical books, by the ſame rules as are followed in the criticiſms of other hiſtories, it muſt be agreed with all commentators, that the recital of the adventures of Abraham, as it is found in the Pentateuch, would be liable to many difficulties, if it were found in another hiſtory.

According to Geneſis, Abraham came out of Haran at the age of ſeventy-five, after the death of his father.

But it is ſaid in the ſame Geneſis, that Thareus his father, having had children at the age of ſeventy, he lived to be two hundred and five years old; ſo that Abraham was an hundred and thirty five years old when he came from Chaldea. It appears ſtrange, that at ſuch an age he ſhould abandon the fertile country of Meſopotamia, to go three hundred miles from thence, in the barren rocky country of Sichem, where no trade was carried on. He is made to go from Sichem to Memphis, which are about ſix hundred miles diſtant, to purchaſe corn; and upon his arrival, the king becomes enamoured with his wife, who is ſeventy five years old.

I do not enter upon the divine part of this hiſtory, I keep cloſe to my reſearches into antiquity. It is ſaid that Abraham received conſiderable preſents from the king of Ægypt. This country was from that time a powerful ſtate; the monarchy was

founded, and arts were therefor cultivated; the flood was ſtopped; canals were dug on every ſide to receive its inundations, without which the country would not have been habitable.

Now, I aſk any reaſonable man, whether ages were not required to eſtabliſh ſuch an empire in a country which had been for a length of time inacceſſible and laid waſte by the very waters which rendered it fertile? Abraham, according to Geneſis, arrived in Ægypt two thouſand years before our vulgar æra. The Maneton's, Herodotus's, Diodorus's, Eratoſthenes's, and many others, are to be forgiven, when they allow the kingdom of Ægypt to be of ſuch amazing antiquity; and this antiquity muſt have been very modern, in compariſon of that of the Chaldeans and Syrians.

May it be allowable to examine a paſſage in the hiſtory of Abraham? He is repreſented upon his going out of Ægypt as a Nomadian paſtor, wandering between mount Carmel and the lake of Aſphaltides: this is the moſt barren deſert of all Arabia Petræa. His tents are conveyed thither by three hundred and eighteen domeſtics, and Lot, his nephew, is ſettled in the borough of Sodom. A king of Babylon, a king of Perſia, a king of Pontus, and kings of ſeveral other nations, league together to wage war againſt Sodom, and four other little neighbouring boroughs. They take theſe boroughs and Sodom. Lot is their priſoner. It is not eaſy to comprehend how five ſuch great and powerful kings

ſhould league together to make an attack, in that manner, upon a band of Arabs, in ſuch a ſavage corner of the earth; or how Abraham defeated ſuch powerful monarchs with only three hundred and eighteen country valets, or how he could purſue them beyond Damaſcus. Some tranſlators have wrote Dan for Damaſcus; but Dan did not exiſt in the time of Moſes, much leſs in the time of Abraham. Lake Aſphaltides, where Sodom was ſituated, was more than three hundred miles diſtant from Damaſcus: all this is above our comprehenſion. Every thing is miraculous in the hiſtory of the Hebrews: we have already ſaid it, and we again repeat it, that we believe theſe prodigies, and all the others, without examining them.

CHAP. X.

Of India.

IF conjectures are allowable, the Indians towards the Ganges are, perhaps, the men who were the moſt anciently united into a body of people. It is certain that the ſoil, where animals moſt eaſily find paſture, is ſoon covered with that ſpecies, which it is fit to nouriſh.

Now there is no country in the world where the human ſpecies have within their reach more wholeſome and agreeable aliments, or in greater plenty,

than towards the Ganges; rice grows ſpontaneouſly; pine-apples, cocoa, dates, and fig trees, offer on every ſide delicious regales; the orange and lemon trees at once yield refreſhing liquor and ſome nouriſhment; ſugar-canes are under their very hand; the palm and broad-leaf fig-trees ſpread the thickeſt ſhade. There is no occaſion in this country to ſkin herds, to defend their children againſt the inclemency of the ſeaſon; they are to this hour brought up to the age of puberty quite naked. Life was here never riſqued for the means of preſerving it, by attacking animals in order to feed upon their diſmembered joints, as has been practiſed every where elſe.

Men would of themſelves have united into ſociety in this happy climate; no conteſt would have ariſen for a parched country to rear bands of negroes: war would not have been waged for a well or a fountain, as with the barbarians of Arabia Petræa.

I ſhall make no mention here of the ancient monuments of which the Bramins boaſt: it is ſufficient to know that the moſt antique rarities which the emperor of China, Camhi, had in his palace, were Indian: he diſplayed to our mathematical miſſionaries Indian ſpecie in coin of much earlier date than any of the copper money of the Chineſe emperors; and it was, probably, from the Indians that the kings of Perſia acquired the art of coining.

The Greeks, before the time of Pythagoras, travelled into India for inſtruction. The ſigns of the

ſeven planets and of the ſeven metals are ſtill almoſt all over the earth, ſuch as the Indians invented: the Arabians were obliged to adopt their cyphers. Thoſe of games, * which do the greateſt honor to the human underſtanding, inconteſtibly come from India; as elephants, for which we have ſubſtituted towers, evince. In fine, the people who were the earlieſt known, the Perſians, Phenicians, Arabians, Ægyptians, went from time immemorial to traffic in India, in order to bring home ſpices, which nature has given to thoſe climates alone; but the Indians never went to aſk any thing from other nations.

One Bacchus is mentioned, who is ſaid to have ſet out from Ægypt, or a country weſt of Aſia, to conquer India. This Bacchus, whoever he was, muſt therefor have known that there was, at the end of our continent, a nation more valuable than his own. Want created the firſt robbers; they invaded India for no other reaſon but becauſe it was rich; and ſurely a rich people is united, civilized, and poliſhed, long before a ſociety of thieves.

What ſtrikes me the moſt in India, is that ancient opinion of the tranſmigration of ſouls, which in time extended itſelf as far as China, and into Europe. Not that the Indians knew what a ſoul was; but they imagined that this principle, whether it was aerial or igneous, ſucceſſively animated dif-

* M. de V———e, by the ſigns of games, evidently means thoſe of cheſs.

ferent bodies. Let us attentively obſerve that ſyſtem of philoſophy which relates to morals. The dread of being condemned by Viſnou and Brama, to become the moſt vile and unhappy of animals, was a great conſtraint upon thoſe of a perverſe diſpoſition. We ſhall preſently find that all the great people had an idea of another life, though their notions of it were different. I meet with very few amongſt the ancient empires, except the Chineſe, who did not eſtabliſh the doctrine of the immortality of the ſoul. Their firſt legiſlators promulgated only moral laws; they thought it ſufficient to exhort men to virtue, and to compel them by a ſevere police.

The doctrine of the metempſichoſis impoſed another conſtraint upon the Indians; the dread of killing their father or their mother, in ſlaying men and animals, inſpired them with horror for murder and all violence, which became amongſt them a ſecond nature. Thus all the Indians, whoſe families are not allied, either to the Arabians or the Tartars, are to this hour the mildeſt of men. Their religion, and the temperature of their climate, rendered theſe people entirely ſimilar to thoſe peaceable animals which we rear in our folds and dove-houſes, to deſtroy them at pleaſure. All ferocious nations who deſcended from the mounts Caucaſus, Taurus, and Imaus, to ſubjugate the inhabitants of the coaſts of the Indies, the Hydaſpes, and the Ganges, conquered them by only appearing.

The ſame thing would happen now to thoſe primitive Chriſtians called Quakers, who are as pacific as the Indians; they would be devoured by other nations, if they were not protected by their warlike countrymen. The Chriſtian religion, which theſe alone ſtrictly follow, is as much an enemy to blood as that of the Pythagoreans. But the Chriſtian people have never obſerved their religion, and the ancient Indian caſts always practiſed theirs; becauſe Pythagoriſm is the only religion in the world which could render the horror of murder part of filial piety, and a religious ſentiment. The tranſmigration of ſouls is a ſyſtem ſo ſimple, and even ſo probable to the eyes of ignorant people; it is ſo eaſy to believe that what animates one man may afterwards animate another, that all thoſe who adopted this religion, imagined that they ſaw the ſouls of their relations in all the men that ſurrounded them: they believed that they were all brothers, fathers, mothers, and children of one another. This idea neceſſarily inſpired univerſal charity; a man trembled at wounding a being of the ſame family; in a word, the ancient religion of India, and that of the literary men in China, are the only ones, wherein men have not been barbarous. How could it afterwards happen that theſe ſame men, who looked upon killing an animal as a crime, ſhould allow the women to burn themſelves upon their huſbands dead bodies, in the vain hope of being born again in bodies that ſhould be more beautiful and

more happy? Becauſe fanaticiſm and contradiction are the appendages to human nature.

It ſhould be particularly obſerved, that abſtinence from the fleſh of animals is a neceſſary conſequence of the climate; meat is ſoon corrupted by its extreme heat and humidity, and is therefor a very bad aliment. Strong liquors are alſo forbidden, by the neceſſity of drinking cooling liquors in India. The metempſichoſis reached, indeed, our northern countries. The Celtes thought that they ſhould regenerate in other bodies; but if the Druids had ſubjoined to this doctrine a prohibition of eating fleſh, they would not have been obeyed.

We ſcarce know any thing of the rites of the ancient Bramins, which are ſtill preſerved. The books of the Hanſcri, which they have ſtill in this ancient ſacred language, give us but very little inſight into them. Their Vedams have been as long unknown as the Zend of the Perſians, and the five kings of the Chineſe. It is ſcarce ſix ſcore years ſince the Europeans had the firſt notion of the Five Kings; and the Zend was never ſeen but by the celebrated Dr. Hyde, who had not wherewithal to purchaſe it, nor to pay the interpreter; and by the trader Chardin, who would not give the price for it he was aſked. We had no other extract of the Zend but the Sadder, which I have amply ſpoke of.

The library of Paris has, by a mere lucky accident, procured an ancient book of the Bramins: this is the Ezourvedam, written before the expedi-

tion of Alexander into India, with a recital of all the ancient rites of the Brachmans, entitled the Cormovedam. This manuſcript, which is tranſlated by a Bramin, is not really the Vedam itſelf, but it is a ſequel of the rites and opinions contained in that law. We may, therefore, flatter ourſelves that we have a knowlege of the three moſt ancient writings in the world.

We can never hope to have any thing from the Ægyptians; their books are loſt, their religion is annihilated; they no longer underſtand their own vulgar tougue, ſtill leſs the ſacred one: ſo that which was nearer to us, more eaſily preſerved, and depoſited in immenſe libraries, is loſt for ever; and we have found, at the end of the world, monuments not leſs authentic, which we had no reaſon to expect finding.

The truth and authenticity of this ritual of the Brachmans, of which I am ſpeaking, cannot be doubted. The author certainly does not flatter his ſect; he does not attempt to diſguiſe their ſuperſtitions, or to give them an air of probability, by feigned explanations, or to excuſe them by allegories. He gives an account of the moſt extravagant laws, with ſimplicity and candour; human underſtanding appears then in all its miſery. If the Bramins obſerved all the laws of their Vedam, there is no monk who would ſubmit to ſuch a ſtate; ſcarce is the ſon of a Bramin born before he is the ſlave of ceremonies; his tongue is rubbed with roſin mixed with

flour; the word Oum is pronounced; twenty divinities are invoked before his naval ſkin is cut; but theſe words are repeated to him, Live to command men; and as ſoon as he can ſpeak, he is taught the dignity of his being. The Brachmans were, in effect, for a long time ſovereigns of India; and theocracy was eſtabliſhed in that vaſt country more than in any country in the world.

The infant is ſoon expoſed to the moon; the ſupreme Being is implored to efface thoſe ſins which the child may have committed, though he has been born only eight days; anthems are ſung to fires; the child, after a hundred ceremonies, is called Chormo, which is the honorary title of the Bramins.

As ſoon as the child can walk, his life is paſſed in bathing and repeating prayers. He ſacrifices for the dead; and this ſacrifice is inſtituted, that Brama may give to the ſouls of the child's anceſtors an agreeable abode in other bodies.

The five winds, that may iſſue from the five openings of the human body, are prayed to. This is not more ſtrange than the prayers which are repeated to the god Crepitum, by the good old women of Rome.

There is no function of nature, no action among the Bramins, without prayers. The firſt time that the child's head is ſhaved, the father ſays to the razor, very devoutly, "Razor, ſhave my ſon as "thou haſt ſhaved the ſun and the god Indro."

It is poſſible that the god Indro might formerly have been ſhaved; but as to the ſun's undergoing that operation, this is not very eaſy to comprehend, unleſs the Bramins have had our Apollo, whom we ſtill repreſent without a beard.

The recital of all theſe ceremonies would be as tedious as they appear ridiculous; and in their blind ſtate they ſay as much of ours: but there is a myſtery among them, which ſhould not be paſſed over in ſilence: this is, the Matricha Machom; this myſtery gives freſh being and new life.

The ſoul is ſuppoſed to be in the breaſt, and this, indeed, is the ſentiment of almoſt all antiquity. The hand is moved from the breaſt to the head, in preſſing upon the nerve which we imagine communicates from one of theſe organs to the other; and in this manner the ſoul is conducted to the brain. When it is certain that the ſoul is well hung, the young man then calls out, that his ſoul and body are united to the ſupreme Being, and ſays, "I am myſelf part of the divinity."

This opinion was that of the moſt reſpectable philoſophers of Greece, of thoſe Stoics who have raiſed human nature above itſelf, that of the divine Antoninus's; and it muſt be owned that nothing was more capable of inſpiring great virtues: to believe one's ſelf part of the divinity, is to impoſe a law of doing nothing that is not worthy of God himſelf.

We find in this law the Brachmans ten command-

ments, and theſe are ten ſins to be avoided; they are divided into three ſpecies, the ſins of the body, thoſe of the word, and thoſe of the will. To ſtrike or kill one's neighbour, to rob, and violate a woman, theſe are bodily ſins; diſſimulation, lying, and ſcandal, are the ſins of the word; thoſe of the will conſiſt in evil-wiſhing, in being envious of others good, in not being affected with others misfortunes. Theſe ten commandments make us forgive all the ridiculous rites. We evidently find that morality is the ſame with all civilized nations; and that the moſt ſacred cuſtoms amongſt one people, appear to others as extravagant or deteſtable. Eſtabliſhed rites at preſent divide mankind, and morality reunites them.

Superſtition never prevented the Brachmans from acknowleging an only God. Strabo, in his fifteenth book, ſays that they adore a ſupreme God; that they remain ſilent for ſeveral years, before they dare ſpeak; that they are ſober, chaſte, and temperate; that juſtice guides their life, and they die without remorſe. This is corroborated by St. Clement of Alexandria, Apuleius, Porphyry, Paladius, and St. Ambroſe. We ſhould conſtantly remember that they enjoyed a terreſtrial paradiſe, and that thoſe who abuſed God's bounties were driven out of that paradiſe.

The fall of degenerated man is the foundation of the theology of almoſt all nations. The natural bias of man to complain of the preſent, and praiſe

the paſt, has made it univerſally believed, that there was a golden age, to which the iron ages have ſucceeded. What is ſtill more extraordinary, is, that the Vedam of the ancient Brachmans taught that the firſt man was Adimo and the firſt woman Procriti: Adimo, ſignified lord, and Procriti meant life; as Hera, among the Phenicians and the Hebrews, ſignified alſo life, or the ſerpent. This conformity deſerves great attention.

CHAP. XVIII.

Of China.

DARE we ſpeak of the Chineſe, without having recourſe to their own annals? They are confirmed by the unanimous opinion of our travellers of different ſects, Jacobins, Jeſuits, Lutherans, Calviniſts, all intereſted in contradicting them. It is evident, that the empire of China was formed upwards of four thouſand years ago. This people of antiquity never heard any mention made of thoſe phyſical revolutions, of thoſe inundations, thoſe fiery devaſtations, the ſlight rememberance of which is preſerved and changed in the fables of the deluge of Deucalion, and the fall of Phaeton. The climate of China was therefor preſerved from theſe ſcourges, as it always was from the plague, literally

ſpeaking, which has made ſuch frequent ravages in Africa, Aſia, and Europe.

If any annals carry with them the ſtamp of certainty, they are thoſe of China, which have united, as has been already ſaid, the hiſtory of heaven with that of earth. Singular from every other people, they have conſtantly marked their epochas by eclipſes, and the conjunctions of the planets; and our aſtronomers, who have examined their calculations, have been ſurpriſed to find them almoſt all juſt. Other nations invented allegorical fables, and the Chineſe wrote their hiſtory with the pen and the aſtrolabe in their hand, with ſuch ſimplicity as cannot be equalled in the reſt of Aſia.

Each reign of their emperors was written by cotemporaries; there are no different methods of reckoning amongſt them, no contradictory chronologies. Our travelling miſſionaries candidly relate, that when they ſpoke to the wiſe emperor Camhi, of the chronology of the Vulgate, of the Septuagint, and the Samaritan, Camhi replied to them, is it poſſible that the books you believe in are at variance?

The Chineſe wrote upon thin tablets of bambou, when the Chaldeans did not yet write upon any thing but bricks: and they have ſtill ſome ancient tablets, which their varniſhes have preſerved from rotting. Theſe are perhaps the moſt ancient monuments in the world. They have no hiſtory before that of their emperors, no fictions, no prodigies,

no inſpired men, who called themſelves demi-gods, as with the Ægyptians and Greeks: when theſe people write, they write reaſonably.

They particularly differ from other nations in their hiſtory, making no mention of a college of prieſts, who ever controuled their laws. The Chineſe do not refer to thoſe ſavage times, when it was neceſſary for men to be cheated in order to be guided. Other people began their hiſtory by the origin of the world; the Zend of the Perſians, the Vedam of the Indians, Sanchoniaton, Manetho; in fine, down to Heſiod, they all trace things back to their origin and the formation of the world. The Chineſe have not been guilty of this folly; their hiſtory comprehends no other than hiſtorical times.

In this place above all others, we ſhould apply our great principle, that a nation whoſe firſt chronicles atteſt the exiſtence of a vaſt empire, powerful and wiſe, muſt have been aſſembled as a body of people for antecedent ages. Here is a people, who, for upwards of four thouſand years, daily write their annals. Again, would it not be madneſs to diſbelieve that to be expert in all the arts neceſſary to ſociety, even ſo far as to write, and to write well, more time was neceſſary than the Chineſe empire has ſubſiſted, in reckoning only from the emperor Tohi, till now? None of the literati of China doubt that the Five Kings exiſted two thouſand three hundred years before our vulgar æra. This monument, then, is four hundred years anterior to the firſt Ba-

bylonian obſervations ſent into Greece by Caliſthenes. Does it really become the literati of Paris to conteſt the antiquity of a Chineſe book, conſidered as authentic by all the tribunals of China?

The firſt rudiments of every kind are always ſlower in their progreſs than the more advanced ſtages. Let us conſtantly remember, that five hundred years ago, ſcarce any one knew how to write, either in the North, in Germany or France. Thoſe tallies, which bakers ſtill uſe, were our hieroglyphics, and our books of accounts. There is no other kind of arithmetic uſed in collecting the taxes: and the name of tallies are ſtill a proof of it in the country. Our capricious cuſtoms, which were not reviſed by writing, till within theſe four hundred and fifty years, ſufficiently teach us how ſcarce the art of writing then was. There are no people in Europe, who have not latterly made more progreſs within half a century in all the arts, than they had made from the time of the invaſions of the Barbarians, till the fourteenth century.

I ſhall not here examine why the Chineſe, who were arrived at the knowlege and practice of every thing that was uſeful in ſociety, did not go as far as we do at preſent in the ſciences: they are, I allow, as bad phyſicians as we were two hundred years ago, and as the Greeks and Romans; but they brought morality to perfection, which is the firſt of the ſciences.

Their vaſt and populous empire was already governed like a family, whoſe monarch was the father; and forty of whoſe legiſlative tribunals were conſidered as the eldeſt brothers, whilſt we were wandering in the foreſt of the Ardennes.

Their religion was ſimple, wiſe, auguſt, free from all ſuperſtition and all barbarity, ere we had yet Theutats, to whom the Druids ſacrificed the children of our anceſtors, in great oſier baſkets.

The Chineſe emperors themſelves offered to the God of the univerſe, to Chang-ti, to the Tien, to the principle of all things, the firſt fruits of their harveſt twice a year, and even of thoſe harveſts which they had ſown with their own hands. This cuſtom was kept up for upwards of forty centuries, in the midſt of revolutions, and even the moſt horrid calamities.

Never was the religion of the emperors and of the tribunals diſhonoured with impoſtures; never was it troubled with quarrels between the prieſts and the empire; never was it burdened with abſurd invocations, which are ſupported one againſt the other by arguments as abſurd as themſelves, the rage of which has at length placed the poignard in the hands of fanatics led on by the factious. Here the Chineſe are particularly ſuperior to all the nations of the univerſe.

Their Confucius framed neither new opinions nor new rites. He neither pretended to be an inſpired man, nor a prophet. He was a magiſtrate, who taught the ancient laws. We ſometimes ſay, very

improperly, "the religion of Confucius;" he had no other than that of all the emperors and all the tribunals; no other than that of the firſt ſages: he recommends nothing but virtue, preaches no myſteries. He ſays, in his firſt book, that in order to learn to govern, we ſhould paſs our whole life in correcting ourſelves; in the ſecond, he proves that God has himſelf graven virtue in the heart of man; he ſays that man is not born wicked, and that he becomes ſo by his own fault: the third is a collection of pure maxims, where we can meet with nothing that is mean, nor any ridiculous allegories. He had five thouſand diſciples; he might have put himſelf at the head of a powerful party; but he rather choſe to inſtruct men, than to govern them.

The temerity we have ſhewn, at the extremity of the weſt, of judging of this eaſtern court, and imputing atheiſm to them, has been vehemently attacked in an Eſſay upon General Hiſtory. What, in fact, muſt have been the rage of ſome amongſt us, to call an empire atheiſtical, when almoſt all its laws are founded upon the knowlege of a Supreme Being, Requiter, and Avenger? the inſcriptions of their temples, of which we have authentic copies, are, "To the firſt principle, without beginning and "without end: he has done all, and governs all: "he is infinitely good, infinitely juſt: he enlight-"ens, he ſupports, and regulates all nature."

The Jeſuits, who are diſliked in Europe, are reproached with flattering the atheiſts of China. A

Frenchman, named Maigret, biſhop of Conon, who did not underſtand a word of Chineſe, was deputed by a pope, to go and try cauſes upon the ſpot; he treated Confucius as an atheiſt, upon theſe words of that great man, "Heaven has given me virtue, "man cannot hurt me." The greateſt of our ſaints never uttered a more celeſtial maxim. If Confucius was an atheiſt, ſo were Cato and the chancellor L'Hoſpital.

Let us here repeat and put calumny to the bluſh; that the ſame man who oppoſed Bayle, by aſſerting that a ſociety of atheiſts was impoſſible, at the ſame time advanced, that the moſt ancient government upon earth was a ſociety of atheiſts. We cannot be too much aſhamed of our contradictions.

Let us again repeat that the literati of China, adorers of one only God, abandoned the people to the ſuperſtition of the Bonzes. They received the ſect of Laokium, that of Fo, and ſeveral others. The magiſtrates conceived that the people might have different religions from that of the ſtate, as they live upon groſſer aliment; they ſuffered the Bonzes, and continued them. In almoſt every other country, thoſe who carried on the trade of Bonzes, had the principal authority.

It is true, that the laws of China do not mention rewards and puniſhments after death; they did not chuſe to affirm what they did not know. This difference between them, and all the great poliſhed people, is very aſtoniſhing. The doctrine of hell

was uſeful, and the government of the Chineſe never admitted it. They imagined, that an exact policy, conſtantly exerciſed, would have greater effect than opinions, which might be oppoſed; and that the people would fear a law always preſent, more than one in future. We ſhall, in the proper places, mention a people infinitely leſs conſiderable, who had nearly the ſame idea, or who rather had no idea, but which was propagated by means unknown to other men.

Let us reſume here, only to add that the empire of China ſubſiſted with ſplendor, when the Chaldeans began the courſe of thoſe nineteen hundred years aſtronomical obſervations, which were ſent into Greece by Caliſthenes. The Bramins then reigned in a part of India; the Perſians had their laws; the Arabians to the ſouth, and the Scythians to the north, had no other habitations than tents. Egypt, which we are now going to ſpeak of, was a powerful kingdom.

CHAP. XIX.

Of ÆGYPT.

IT evidently appears to me that the Ægyptians, as antient as they are, could not be united into a civilized, poliſhed, induſtrious body, till very long after all the people that have paſſed in review.

The reaſon whereof is clear: Ægypt, as far as the Delta, is incloſed by two chains of rocks, between which is the fall of the Nile, in deſcending from Ethiopia from ſouth to north. From the cataracts of the Nile to its entrance, in a ſtrait line, the diſtance is only 160 leagues, of 3000 geometrical feet each; and its breadth is no more than thirteen and twenty leagues, till it waſhes the Delta, a low part of Ægypt, which comprehends an extent of fifty leagues from eaſt to weſt. On the right of the Nile are the deſerts of Thebais; and on the left, the uninhabitable ſands of Lybia, which extend as far as the little country where the temple of Ammon was erected.

The inundations of the Nile muſt, in the courſe of ages, have removed all the columns of a land which was four months in the year under water: theſe ſtagnant waters, continually increaſing, muſt, for a long time, have made all Ægypt one continued moraſs. This is not the caſe upon the ſhores of the Tyger, the Indus, the Ganges, and other rivers, which alſo overflow once every year, in the ſummer, when the ſnow melts. Their inundations are not ſo great, and the extenſive plains, which ſurround them, enable the cultivators to completely profit of the fertility of the ſoil.

We ſhould particularly obſerve that the plague, that inherent ſcourge of humanity, breaks out, at leaſt, once in ten years in Ægypt; it muſt have been much more deſtructive, when the waters of

the Nile, by ſtagnating upon the land, added their infection to that horrid contagion; and thus the population of Ægypt muſt have been very ſmall for many ages.

The natural order of things ſeems then invincibly to demonſtrate, that Ægypt was one of the laſt inhabited lands. The Troglodytes, born upon thoſe rocks, which are waſhed by the Nile, were compelled to perform labours as continual as they were difficult; to dig canals for the reception of this river; to erect cabbins; and to raiſe them twenty-five feet above the earth. This was, however, neceſſary before Thebes with its hundred gates could be built; before Memphis could be erected, or the conſtruction of pyramids could be thought of. It is very ſtrange, that no ancient hiſtorian has made ſo natural a reflection.

We have already obſerved, that in thoſe times, wherein Abraham's travels are placed, Ægypt was a powerful kingdom: its kings had already erected ſome of thoſe pyramids, which ſtill aſtoniſh the eyes and imagination. The Arabs have written, that the greateſt was erected by Saurid, ſeveral ages before Abraham; the time of building the famous Thebes, with its hundred gates, is not known. It ſeems that in thoſe obſcure times, great cities bore the name of the cities of God, like Babylon. But who can believe, that from each of the hundred gates of Thebes, two hundred chariots, armed in a warlike manner, and a hundred thouſand warri-

ors, iſſued? They would amount to twenty thouſand chariots, and a million of ſoldiers; and if there was one ſoldier among every five perſons, this number muſt make us ſuppoſe five million of inhabitants for a ſingle city, in a country that is not ſo large as Spain or France, and which, according to Diodorus Siculus, contained no more than three millions of inhabitants, and but ſixty thouſand ſoldiers for its defence. Diodorus ſays, (book 1ſt) that Ægypt was ſo well peopled, that it formerly contained ſeven millions of inhabitants; and that even in his time there were three millions.

You do not give greater credit to the conqueſts of Seſoſtris, than to the million of ſoldiers that iſſued from the hundred gates of Thebes. Do yon not imagine that you are reading the hiſtory of Picrocoles, when thoſe who copy Herodotus tell you that the father of Seſoſtris, founding his hopes upon a dream, and an oracle, deſtined his ſon to conquer the world? that he brought up all the children that were born the ſame day as this ſon, in his own court, to the trade of arms; that they had no victuals allowed them till they had run the length of eight of our longeſt leagues; that at length Seſoſtris appeared with his ſix hundred thouſand men, twenty-ſeven thouſand warlike cars, and ſet out to conquer all the earth, from the Indus to the Euxine ſea; and that he ſubjugated Mingrelia, and Georgia, then called Colchi. Herodotus does not in the leaſt doubt that Seſoſtris left colonies in Colchi, be-

cauſe he ſaw tawny men with frizzled hair, who reſembled Ægyptians, at Colchis. I would much ſooner believe, that this ſpecies of Scythians, upon the banks of the Black and Caſpian ſeas, came to renounce the Ægyptians, when they ravaged, for ſuch a length of time, Aſia before the reign of Cyrus. I ſhould believe they carried with them ſlaves from Ægypt, that true country of ſlaves, whoſe deſcendents Herodotus might ſee, or thought he ſaw, in Colchi. If theſe Colchians had, indeed, the ſuperſtition to be circumciſed, they probably retained that cuſtom from Ægypt, as it always happened that the people of the North adopted the rites of thoſe civilized nations whom they had conquered.

The Ægyptians were never, at any known period, a formidable people; they were never attacked by any enemy, without being conquered. The Scythians began; after the Scythians, came Nebucodonoſer, who conquered Ægypt without oppoſition. Cyrus had nothing more to do than to ſend thither one of his lieutenants; when they revolted under Cambyſes, one campaign was ſufficient to make them ſubmit; and this Cambyſes ſo much deſpiſed the Ægyptians, that he killed their god Apis, in their preſence. Ochus reduced Ægypt to a province of his kingdom. Alexander, Cæſar, Auguſtus, and the calif Omar, conquered Ægypt with equal facility. This ſame people of Colchis, under the name of Mammelucs, returned again to

ſeize upon Ægypt in the time of the cruſades: at length Selim conquered Ægypt in a ſingle compaign, like all thoſe who had made their appearance. There never were any other but our croiſes, who ſuffered themſelves to be beat by thoſe Ægyptians, the moſt daſtardly of mankind, as has been elſewhere obſerved; but this was owing to their being then governed by the Mammelucs of Colchis.

It is true that an humbled people might formerly have been conquerors, as the Greeks and Romans teſtify. But we are more certain of the ancient grandeur of the Romans and Greeks, than that of Seſoſtris.

I do not deny that he whom we call Seſoſtris might have carried on a fortunate war againſt ſome Ethiopians, ſome Arabs, and ſome people of Phenicia. This was ſufficient, in the language of ſome exaggerators, to make him the conqueror of the earth. There is no ſubjugated nation, who does not pretend formerly, to have ſubjugated others. The vain glory of ancient ſuperiority adminiſters conſolation for preſent humiliation.

Herodotus ingenuouſly related to the Greeks, what the Ægyptians had told him; but how comes it that in ſpeaking to him of nothing but prodigies, they gave him no intimation of the famous plagues of Ægypt; of that magical battle between the ſorcerers of Pharaoh, and the miniſter of the God of the Jews; and of a whole army ſwallowed up in the Red Sea, under waters which roſe like mountains to the

right and left to let the Hebrews paſs, and which, by their fall, drowned the Ægyptians? this certainly was the greateſt event in the hiſtory of the world. Neither Herodotus, Manetho, or Eratoſthenes, nor any of the Greeks, who were ſo fond of the marvellous, and who kept a regular correſpondence with Ægypt, mention theſe miracles, which ſhould employ the attention of all generations. I certainly do not make this reflection to invalide the teſtimony of the Hebrew books, which I revere as I ought to do. I wonder only at the ſilence of all the Ægyptians and all the Greeks. God doubtleſs was unwilling that ſo divine a hiſtory ſhould be tranſmitted to us by any prophane hand.

CHAP. XX.

Of the LANGUAGE of the ÆGYPTIANS and their SYMBOLS.

THE language of the Ægyptians had no affinity to that of the nations of Aſia. You do not find among this people, the word Adeni, or Adonai, nor Bal, nor Baal, terms which ſignify the Lord; nor Mitra, which, with the Perſians, was the ſun; nor Melch, which ſignified king, in Syria; nor Shak, which ſignifies the ſame thing among the Indians. On the contrary, you find that Pharaoh was the Ægyptian name that anſwers to king:

Aſhireth (Oſiris) anſwering to the Mirah of the Perſians; and the vulgar word On, ſignified the Sun. The Chaldean prieſts called themſelves Mag; thoſe of the Ægyptians Choen, as Diodorus Siculus relates. The hieroglyphics, characters, and alphabets of Ægypt, which time has ſpared, and which we ſtill find engraved upon the obeliſks, have no relation to thoſe of any other people.

Before men had invented hieroglyphics, they had doubtleſs repreſentative ſigns; for in fact, what could the firſt men do, beſides what we do, when we are in their place? Let a child be in a country ignorant of its language, and he will talk by ſigns; if he is not underſtood, he will draw upon a wall, with a piece of charcoal, the things that he wants, if he has the leaſt ſagacity.

They therefor, at firſt, painted in a very clumſy ſtyle, what they wanted to communicate; and the art of drawing, doubtleſs, preceded that of writing. Thus it was, that the Mexicans and Peruvians wrote: they had not made any farther progreſs in the art: ſuch was the method of all the firſt poliſhed people. In time, they invented ſymbolical figures; two hands united ſignified peace; darts, repreſented war; an eye, ſignified the divinity; a ſcepter, implied royalty; and lines, which joined theſe figures, expreſſed ſhort phraſes.

The Chineſe at length invented characters, to expreſs each word of their language. But what people invented the alphabet, which, in placing be-

fore our eyes the different ſounds that can be articulated, facilitates the combination of all poſſible words by writing? who could teach men to engrave thus eaſily their thoughts? I ſhall not here repeat all the ſtories of the ancients upon this art, which eternizes all arts; I ſhall only ſay that many centuries were neceſſary to compaſs it.

The Choens, or prieſts of Ægypt, continued for a long time to write in hieroglyphics, which is forbidden by the ſecond law of the Hebrews; and when the people of Ægypt had alphabetical characters, the Choens adopted different ones, which they called ſacred; and in order to keep a conſtant barrier between them and the people, the Magi and the Bramins made uſe of the ſame kind of characters; ſo neceſſary has the art of diſguiſe to men appeared, in order to govern them. Thoſe Choens not only had characters peculiar to themſelves, but they had ſtill preſerved the ancient language of Ægypt, when time had changed the vulgar tongue.

Manetho, who is quoted by Euſebius, ſpeaks of two columns engraved by Toth, the firſt Hermes, in the characters of the ſacred language. But who knows the period of this Hermes's exiſtence?

The Ægyptians were particularly careful in preſerving their firſt ſymbols. It is curious to obſerve upon their monuments, a ſerpent biting his own tail, to repreſent the twelve months of the year, and each of theſe months expreſſed by animals which are not the ſigns of the zodiac, known to us. We

again ſee the five days added to the twelve months, under the form of a little ſerpent, with five figures upon it; theſe are a ſparrow-hawk, a man, a dog, a lion, and a ſtork. We ſee them drawn in Kirker, after the monuments preſerved at Rome. Thus we find that almoſt every thing in antiquity was ſymbolical and allegorical.

CHAP XXI.

Of the Monuments of the Ægyptians.

IT is certain that after the ages in which the Ægyptians fertilized the ſoil, by the draining of the flood; after thoſe times, when villages began to be changed into opulent cities, then the neceſſary arts being arrived at perfection, the oſtentatious arts began to be in eſteem: ſovereigns were then found who employed their ſubjects, and ſome Arabs, in the neighbourhood of lake Sirbon, to build them palaces and pyramid-tombs, to cut enormous ſtones in the quarries of Upper Ægypt, and bring them afloat upon raſts, as far as Memphis; to erect upon maſſive columns, great flat ſtones, without either taſte or proportion. They were acquainted with the great, but not the beautiful. They taught the firſt Greeks; but the Greeks were afterwards their maſters in every thing, when they had built Alexandria.

It is melancholy to think, that in Cæſar's wars, half of the famous library of the Ptolemies was burnt;

and that the other half heated the baths of Muſſulmen, when Omar ſubdued Ægypt. We ſhould have known at leaſt the origin of the ſuperſtitions with which that people were infected, the chaos of their philoſophy, and ſome of their antiquities and ſciences.

They muſt certainly have been at peace for ſeveral ages, for their princes to have had time and leiſure to raiſe all thoſe prodigious buildings, the greateſt part of which ſtill ſubſiſt.

Their pyramids muſt have been the produce of many years and much expence; a great number of inhabitants, together with foreign ſlaves, muſt have been for a long time employed in theſe immenſe works. They were erected by deſpotiſm, vanity, ſervitude, and ſuperſtition; in fact, none but a deſpotic king could thus have conſtrained nature: England, for example, is more powerful than Ægypt was. Could a king of England employ his people to raiſe ſuch monuments?

Vanity, doubtleſs, had its ſhare; it was the ambition of the ancient kings of Ægypt, who ſhould raiſe the fineſt pyramid to his father, or to himſelf. Servitude procured the labouring hand; and as to ſuperſtition, we know that theſe pyramids were tombs; we know that the chocamatins, or ſhoen, of Ægypt, that is to ſay the prieſts, had perſuaded the people that the ſoul returned into its own body, at the expiration of a thouſand years. They choſe that the body ſhould be a thouſand years entirely

free from all corruption: for which reaſon it was ſo very carefully embalmed; and to ſecure it from all accidents, it was incloſed in a large ſtone, that had no opening. The kings and great people erected tombs to themſelves, in ſuch forms as they judged would be the leaſt expoſed to the injuries of time. The preſervation of their bodies ſurpaſſes all human hopes. There are now Ægyptian mummies, which have been buried upwards of four thouſand years. Carcaſſes have ſubſiſted as long as pyramids.

This opinion of a reſurrection, after ten centuries, was afterwards adopted by the Greeks, who were diſciples of the Ægyptians, and the Romans, who were diſciples of the Greeks. We find it in the ſixth book of the Æneid, which is only a deſcription of the myſteries of Iſis and Ceres of Eleuſina.

Has omnes ubi mille rotam volvêre per annos
Lethæum ad fluvium Deus advocat agmine magno;
Scilicèt ut memores ſupera et convexa reviſant.

But when a thouſand rolling years are paſt,
(So long their puniſhment and penance laſt,)
Whole droves of minds are, by the driving god,
Compelled to drink the deep Lethæan flood:
In large forgetful draughts to ſteep the cares
Of their paſt labours, and their irkſome years.

It was afterwards introduced among the Chriſtians, who eſtabliſhed the reign of a thouſand years; the ſect of the Millenarians has handed it down to our time. Thus have many opinions paſſed all over

the world. This is ſufficient to point out the deſign of erecting thoſe pyramids. We ſhall not repeat what has been ſaid upon their architecture and dimenſions; I examine only the hiſtory of the human underſtanding.

CHAP. XXII.

Of the ÆGYPTIAN RITES, and CIRCUMCISION.

IN the firſt place, did the Ægyptians acknowlege one ſupreme God? If this queſtion had been propoſed to the commonalty of that people themſelves, they would not have known what to reply: if to the young ſtudents in Ægyptian theology, they would have harangued for a long time, without underſtanding themſelves: if to any one of the ſages conſulted by Pythagoras, Plato, or Plutarch, he would ingenuouſly have replied, that he adored only one God; which anſwer would be founded upon the ancient inſcription of the ſtatue of Iſis, "I am "what is;" and this other, "I am all that has been "and will be; no mortal can raiſe my veil." He would have pointed out the globe, placed upon the temple-gate of Memphis, which repreſented the unity of the divine nature, under the word *kneſ*. The moſt ſacred name among the Ægyptians, was that which the Hebrews adopted, *Y ha ho*. It is variouſly pronounced; but Clement of Alexandria

aſſures us, in his Stromates, that thoſe who entered into the temple of Serapis, were obliged to wear the inſcription of the name *I ha ho*, or *I ha hou*, which ſignified the God eternal. The Arabians have retained only the ſyllable *hou*, afterwards adopted by the Turks, who pronounce it with ſtill greater reſpect than the word *allah*; for they uſe *allah* in converſation, and they never utter *hou*, but when at prayer. Let us obſerve here *(en paſſant)* that when the Turkiſh ambaſſador, Said Effendi, ſaw the repreſentation of the *Bourgeois gentilhomme* (or Tradeſman turned Gentleman) and that ridiculous ceremony in which he is made a Turk, and hearing the ſacred word *hou* pronounced with deriſion and evtravagant geſtures, he looked upon this diverſion as the moſt abominable profanation.

But to reſume. The Ægyptian prieſts feed a ſacred ox, a ſacred dog, and a ſacred crocodile, it is very true; and the Romans had alſo their ſacred geeſe: they had gods of every kind, and the devotees had, among their houſhold deities, the god of the open-chair, *Deum ſtercutium*, and the god *Pet*, *Deum crepitum*; but did they leſs acknowlege the *Deum optimum maximum*, the maſter of gods and men? Which is the country that has not abounded with ſuperſtitious bigots, and a ſmall number of reaſonable people?

What ſhould be particularly obſerved with reſpect to Ægypt and all other nations, is, that they never had any invariable opinions, any more than

laws, that were always uniform, notwithſtanding the attachment which men have to their ancient cuſtoms. There is nothing immutable but geometry; all things elſe undergo inceſſant variation.

The learned diſpute, and will diſpute. One aſſerts that the ancient people were all idolaters, another denies it; one ſays that they adored only one God, without any image; another ſays that they adored ſeveral gods, in ſeveral images. They are all right; nothing more is requiſite than to diſtinguiſh the times and men which have changed; there never was any agreement. When the Ptolomies, and the principal prieſts, made a joke of Apis's bull, the people proſtrated themſelves before it.

Juvenal ſays, that the Ægyptians adored onions; but we do not find it in any hiſtory. There is a great deal of difference between a ſacred onion, and an onion that is a god: every thing is not adored that is placed, that is conſecrated, upon the altar. We read in Cicero, that thoſe men who have drained every kind of ſuperſtition, have not yet arrived at that of eating their gods; and that this is the only abſurdity they are deficient in.

Is circumciſion derived from the Egyptians, the Arabians, or the Ethiopians? I am ignorant. Let thoſe who know ſpeak. All I know is, that the prieſts of antiquity imprinted upon their bodies marks of their conſecration, as the Roman ſoldiers were afterwards marked with a hot iron. There the ſacrificing prieſts ſlaſhed the bodies, as did af-

terwards the prieſts of Bellona: here they made themſelves eunuchs, in imitation of the prieſts of Cybele.

It was not in order to preſerve health, that the Ethiopians, the Arabians, and the Ægyptians, circumciſed themſelves. It is ſaid, that their prepuce was too long; and if an opinion may be formed of a nation by an individual, I have ſeen a young Ethiopian, who, being born out of his country, was not circumciſed; and I can aver that his prepuce was preciſely the ſame as ours.

I do not know what nation firſt thought proper to make a proceſſion of the Kteis and the Phallum, that is to ſay, a repreſentation of the diſtinctive ſigns of male and female animals; a ceremony which would be now indecent, but which was formerly ſacred. This cuſtom prevailed among the Ægyptians; firſt fruits were offered to the gods, the moſt precious things were immolated to them. It ſeemed natural and juſt, that the prieſts ſhould offer up a ſmall part of the organ of generation, to thoſe by whom every thing was engendered. The Ethiopians and Arabians alſo circumciſed their daughters, by cutting away a very ſmall part of the nymphæ: which proves that neither health nor cleanlineſs could be the reaſon of this ceremony; for certainly a girl uncircumciſed may be as clean as one circumciſed.

When the prieſts of Ægypt had conſecrated this operation, their initiated alſo underwent it; but, in

time, this mark of diſtinction was given up to the prieſts alone. We do not find that any one of the Ptolomies had been circumciſed; and the other Romans never diſgraced the Ægyptians, with the name of Apella, which they gave to the Jews. The Jews had adopted circumciſion from the Ægyptians, with part of their ceremonies. They have always retained it, as well as the Arabians and the Ethiopians; the Turks have ſubmitted to it, though it is not ordered in the Alcoran. It is only an ancient uſage, which was introduced by ſuperſtition, and which has been preſerved by cuſtom.

CHAP XXIII.

Of the MYSTERIES of the ÆGYPTIANS.

I am far from knowing what nation firſt invented theſe myſteries, which have gained ſo much credit from the Euphrates to the Tyber. The Ægyptians make no mention of the author of the myſteries of Iſis. Thoſe, eſtabliſhed in Perſia, are attributed to Zoroaſter, thoſe of Greece to Cadmus and Inachus, thoſe of Thrace to Orpheus, and thoſe of Crete to Minos. It is certain that all theſe myſteries intimate a future ſtate; for Celſus ſays to the Chriſtians, "You boaſt of believing in eternal puniſhments, and do not all the miniſters of myſteries declare them to the initiated?"

The Greeks, who borrowed ſo many things from the Ægyptians; their Tartharoth, of which they made the Tartarus; the lake, of which they made the Acheron: the waterman Charon, of whom they made the ferryman of the dead, framed their famous myſteries of Eleuſina only upon the model of thoſe of Iſis. But no one can affirm that the myſteries of Zoroaſter did not precede thoſe of the Ægyptians: they are both of the greateſt antiquity, and all the Greek and Latin authors, who have made mention of them, agree that the unity of God, the immortality of the ſoul, rewards and puniſhments after death, were pronounced in thoſe ſacred ceremonies.

It is very probable that the Ægyptians, having once eſtabliſhed thoſe myſteries, preſerved their rites; for notwithſtanding their extreme levity, they were invariable in their ſuperſtition. Their prayer which we meet with in Apuleius, when Lucius is initiated into the myſteries of Iſis, muſt have been the ancient prayer: "The celeſtial powers ſerve "thee, the infernal regions are in ſubmiſſion to "thee, the univerſe turns round in thine hand, thy "feet ſtamp upon Tartarus, the ſtars reply to thy "voice, the ſeaſons return at thy order, the ele-"ments obey thee, etc.

Can there be a ſtronger evidence of the unity of one only God, acknowleged by the Ægyptians, in the midſt of all their contemptible ſuperſtitions?

CHAP. XXIV.

Of the GREEKS; of their ancient DELUGES; of their ALPHABET, and their GENIUS.

GREECE is a ſmall hilly country, interſected by the ſea, of much the ſame extent as Great-Britain. Every thing in this country teſtifies the phyſical revolutions it has undergone. The iſlands which ſurround it ſufficiently ſhew, by the continued ſhoals near their ſhores, by the ſhallowneſs of the ſea, by the herbs and roots which grow under the water, that they were detached from the continent. The gulphs of Eubius, Calcis, Argos, Corinth, Actium, and Meſſina, demonſtrate that the ſea has made paſſages through the earth. The ſea-ſhell beds, with which are covered thoſe mountains that ſurround the famous vale of Tempe, are ocular proofs of an ancient inundation: and the deluges of Ogiges and Deucalion, which have produced ſo many fables, are hiſtorically true. This may probably be the reaſon why the Greeks are ſo new a people. Theſe great revolutions ſunk them once more in barbarity, at the time that the nations of Aſia and Ægypt were flouriſhing.

I ſhall leave to men more learned than myſelf, the trouble of proving that the three children of Noah, who were the only inhabitants of the globe, divided the whole of it amongſt them; that they

ſeparated from each other two or three thouſand leagues, laying every where the foundation of powerful empires; and that Javan, his grandſon, peopled all Greece, in paſſing through Italy: that from thence the Greeks derived the name of Ionians, Ion having detached colonies upon the coaſts of Aſia Minor; that Ion plainly appears to be Javan, by changing the *J* into *Ja*, and the *on* into *van*. Such tales are told to children, and children do not believe them:

Nec pueri credunt niſi qui nondum æra lavantur.

The deluge of Ogiges is uſually placed about twelve hundred years before the firſt olympaid: the firſt who ſpeaks of it is Aceſitas, quoted by Euſebius, in his evangelical Preparation, and by George le Sincelle. Greece, it is ſaid, remained a deſert two hundred years after the ſea had made this irruption into the country. It is, nevertheleſs, aſſerted, that a government was at the ſame time eſtabliſhed in Siciones and in Argos: the names of the firſt magiſtrates of theſe little provinces are even mentioned, and they are called Baſiloi, which anſwers to princes. But let us not loſe time in penetrating theſe uſeleſs obſcurities.

There was another inundation in the time of Deucalion the ſon of Prometheus. The fable adds that there remained no other inhabitants than Deucalion and Pyrra, who made freſh men, by throwing ſtones behind them, through their legs. The

world is ſtocked with men faſter than a warren is with rabbits.

If very judicious men, like Petau the jeſuit, is to be believed, a ſingle ſon of Noah produced a race, which, at the end of twenty-eight years, amounted to ſix hundred and twenty-three thouſand millions, ſix hundred and twelve millions of men. The calculation is a little high. We are ſo unhappy at preſent, that in twenty-ſix marriages, there are uſually but four which produce children that become fathers. This calculation is formed upon the accounts of the regiſters of the greateſt cities. Of a thouſand children that are born the ſame year, there are ſcarce ſix hundred remaining at the end of twenty years. Let us ſuſpect the veracity of Petau, and ſuch, who like him, create children with the ſtroke of a pen, as well as thoſe who relate that Deucalion and Pyrra peopled Greece by throwing ſtones.

Greece, we know, was the country of fables, and almoſt every fable was the origin of a doctrine, of a temple, and a public feaſt. By what exceſs of madneſs, by what abſurd obſtinacy, have ſo many compilers endeavoured to prove, in ſo many enormous volumes, that a public feaſt, eſtabliſhed in commemoration of an event, is a demonſtration of the truth of that event? What, becauſe young Bacchus is celebrated in a temple iſſuing from Jupiter's thigh, Jupiter really had concealed Bacchus in his thigh? What, Cadmus and his wife were chang-

ed into ſerpents, in Beotia, becauſe the Beotians commemorated ſuch an event in their ceremonies! Did the temple of Caſtor and Pollux, at Rome, demonſtrate that thoſe gods deſcended upon earth, in favour of the Romans?

Much rather aſſure yourſelf, when you ſee an antient feaſt, or an antique temple, that they are the works of error. This error gains credit at the end of two or three centuries; it afterwards becomes ſacred and temples are erected to chimeras.

On the contrary, in hiſtorical times, the moſt noble truths have but few ſectaries; the greateſt men die without honour. The Themiſtocles's, the Cimons, the Miltiades's, the Ariſtides's, the Phocions, are perſecuted; whilſt Perſius, Bacchus, and other fantaſtical perſonages, have temples.

Credit may be given to a people with regard to what they ſay of themſelves to their own diſadvantage, when theſe accounts are attended with probability, and are no way contradictory to the common order of nature.

The Athenians, who were diſperſed in a very barren land, inform us themſelves, that an Ægyptian, named Cecrops, who was driven out of his country, gave them their firſt inſtitutions. This appears ſurpriſing, becauſe the Ægyptians were not navigators; but it might have happened that the Phenicians, who travelled throughout all nations, carried Cecrops into Attica. It is very certain, that the Greeks did not adopt the Ægyptian letters,

which theirs no way reſemble. The Phenicians carried them their firſt alphabet, which then conſiſted of only ſixteen characters, and are evidently the ſame The Phenicians afterwards added eight letters, which the Greeks ſtill retain.

I look upon an alphabet as an inconteſtible monument of the country from whence a nation derived its firſt knowlege. It appears very probable, again, that theſe Phenicians diſcovered the ſilver mines, which were in Attica, as they worked thoſe of Spain. Merchants were the firſt preceptors of theſe ſame Greeks, who afterwards inſtructed all other nations.

Theſe people, all barbarous as they were in the time of Ogiges, ſeem to have been born with organs more favourable to the fine arts, than any other people. They had ſomething in their nature more cunning and ſubtle: their language evinces it; for even before they knew how to write, we find that they had a more harmonious mixture of ſoft conſonants and vowels in their language, than any other people of Aſia were ever acquainted with.

The name of Knath, which ſignifies the Phenicians, according to Sanchoniatho, is certainly not ſo harmonious as that of Hellenos or Graios. Argos, Athens Lacedemon, and Olympus, ſound better to the ear than the city of Reheboth. Sophia, wiſdom, is ſofter than Shochemath in Syric and Baſileus in Hebrew. Roy ſounds better than Melk or Shack. Compare the names of Agamemnon, Dio-

mede, Idomeneus, with thoſe of Mardokempad, Simordak, Sohaſduch, Niricaſſolahſſar. Joſeph himſelf, in the book againſt Appion, acknowleges that the Greeks could not pronounce the barbarous name of Jeruſalem, becauſe the Jews pronounced it Herſhala'im: this word grated the throat of an Athenian; and it was changed by the Greeks from Herſhala'im to Jeruſalem.

The Greeks transformed all the harſh Syriac, Perſian, and Ægyptian names. Of Coreſh they made Cyrus; of Iſheth and Oſhireth, they made Iſis and Oſiris; of Moph, they made Memphis, and at length brought the barbarians to accuſtom themſelves to their pronunciation; ſo that in the time of the Ptolomies. the Ægyptian cities and gods had no other than Grecian names.

The Indus and Ganges had their names from the Greeks. The Ganges, in the Bramins language, was called Sannoubi, and the Indus Sombadipo. Such are the ancient names that we find in the Vedam.

The Greeks, in extending themſelves upon the coaſts of Aſia Minor, carried with them their harmony. Their Homer was probably born at Smyrna.

Fine architecture, perfect ſculpture, painting, and good muſic, real poetry, real eloquence, the method of writing good hiſtory, and, in a word, philoſophy, though unfaſhioned and obſcure; all theſe things were handed down to other nations by

the Greeks. The laſt comers ſurpaſſed their maſters in every thing.

Ægypt had never any fine ſtatues by Grecian hands. Ancient Balbec in Syria, ancient Palmyra in Arabia, had not thoſe regular magnificent palaces and temples, till the ſovereigns of thoſe countries called in Grecian artiſts. We find nothing but the remains of barbariſm, as has been in another place obſerved, in the ruins of Perſepolis, built by the Perſians; and the monuments of Balbec and Palmyra are ſtill, under their ruins, maſter pieces of architecture.

CHAP. XXV.

Of the GREEK LEGISLATORS, of MINOS and ORPHEUS, and of the IMMORTALITY of the SOUL.

HOW many compilers repeat the battles of Marathon and Salaminia! Theſe are great exploits that are very well known: others are inceſſantly telling us that a proud ſon of Noah, named Settim, was king of Macedon, becauſe in the firſt book of Maccabees, it is ſaid that Alexander went out of the country of Kittim. Other objects ſhall engage my attention.

Minos lived about the time in which we place Moſes; and this has given the learned Huet, biſhop of Avranche, ſome falſe grounds to maintain that

Minos, born in Crete, and Moſes, born upon the confines of Egypt, were the ſame perſon; a ſyſtem which, as abſurd as it is, has found ſome partizans.

This is not a Grecian fable; Minos was doubtleſs a legiſlative king. The famous marbles of Paros, thoſe moſt precious monuments of antiquity (and for which we are indebted to the Engliſh) fix his birth four hundred and eighty two years before our vulgar æra. Homer, in his Odyſſey, calls him "The wiſe confident of God." Flavian Joſephus does not heſitate ſaying, that he received his laws from a God. This is a little ſtrange in a Jew, who, it ſhould ſeem, ought to allow no other God than his own, unleſs he thought like the Romans his maſters, and like all the firſt people of antiquity, who allowed the exiſtence of all the Gods of other nations.

It is certain that Minos was a very rigid legiſlator, as it was ſuppoſed that he ſhould judge the departed ſouls in the infernal regions; it is evident that the belief of a future ſtate generally prevailed, at that time, in a conſiderable part of Aſia and Europe.

Orpheus is as real a perſonage as Minos: it is true that the marbles of Paros do not mention him; this probably was becauſe he was not born in Greece, properly ſo called, but in Thrace. Some have doubted the exiſtence of the firſt Orpheus, upon a paſſage of Cicero, in his excellent book upon the Nature of the Gods. Cotta, one of the interlocutors, avers that Ariſtotle did not believe that this

Orpheus had been among the Greeks; but Ariſtotle makes no mention of him in thoſe works of his which are handed down to us. Beſides, the opinion of Cotta does not coincide with that of Cicero. A hundred ancient writers mention Orpheus. The myſteries which bear his name teſtify his exiſtence. Pauſanias, who was the moſt exact writer amongſt the Greeks, ſays, that his verſes were ſung in religious ceremonies, in preference to thoſe of Homer, who did not live till a great while afterwards. We know very well he did not deſcend into hell; but even this fable proves that the infernal regions were a point of the theology of thoſe remote times.

The vague opinion of the permanence of the ſoul after death, an aerial ſoul, a ſhadow of the body, manes, a light breeze, an unknown, incomprehenſible ſoul, but yet exiſting, and the belief of rewards and puniſhments in a future ſtate, were adopted throughout Greece, in the iſlands, in Aſia, and in Egypt.

The Jews were the only people who appeared entirely ignorant of this myſtery; the book of their laws does not make the leaſt mention of it: we there meet with nothing but temporary rewards and puniſhments. In Exodus, we read, "Honour thy "father and thy mother, that Adonai may pro- "long thy days upon earth:" in the book of Zend "(part II.) we find, "Honour father and mother, "in order to deſerve heaven."

Biſhop Warburton, who has demonſtrated, that

the Pentateuch makes no mention of the immortality of the ſoul, ſuppoſes, that this dogma was not neceſſary in theocracy. Arnaud, in his Apology of Port Royal, expreſſes himſelf thus: "It is the "ſummit of ignorance to doubt of this truth, which "is the moſt prevalent, and which is atteſted by "all the fathers, that the promiſes made in the "Old Teſtament are only temporal and terreſtrial, "and that the Jews adored God only for carnal "advantages."

It has been objected, that if the Perſians, the Arabians, the Syrians, the Indians, the Ægyptians, and the Greeks, believed the immortality of the ſoul, a future life, eternal rewards and puniſhments, the Hebrews might alſo believe them: that if all the legiſlators of antiquity have eſtabliſhed wiſe laws upon this foundation, Moſes might alſo have done the ſame: that if he was ignorant of thoſe uſeful dogmas, he was unworthy of leading a nation: that if he knew them and concealed them, he was ſtill more unworthy.

To theſe arguments, it is anſwered, that God, whoſe organ was Moſes, deigned to level himſelf to the meaneſt of the Jews capacity. I ſhall not engage in this thorny queſtion, and conſtantly reſpecting every thing that is divine, I ſhall continue examining the hiſtory of men.

CHAP. XXVI.

Of the SECTS amongſt the GREEKS.

IT appears that amongſt the Ægyptians, amongſt the Perſians, amongſt the Chaldeans, and amongſt the Indians, there was but one ſect of philoſophy. The prieſts of theſe nations were all of a particular race; what was called wiſdom belonged only to this race. Their ſacred tongue, unknown to the people, confined all ſcience to them. But in Greece, which was more free and happy, the avenues to reaſon were known to every one: all people gave vent to their ideas; and, by this means, the Greeks became the moſt ingenious people upon the earth. And thus, in our time, the Engliſh nation is become the moſt enlightened, becauſe men may think with impunity amongſt them.

The Stoics adopted one univerſal ſoul of the world, wherein all the ſouls of living creatures were replunged. The Epicureans denied there was a ſoul, and were acquainted with nothing but phyſical principles. They maintained that the Gods did not concern themſelves with worldly affairs; and the Epicureans were left in peace, as they had left the Gods.

The ſchools re-echoed from the time of Thales to the time of Plato and Ariſtotle, with philoſophi-

cal diſputes; which at once diſcloſe the wiſdom and folly of the human mind, its grandeur and weakneſs. They argued, almoſt conſtantly, without underſtanding one another, as we have done ſince the thirteenth century, when we began to reaſon.

Plato's reputation does not aſtoniſh me: all philoſophers were unintelligible; they were as much ſo as other people, and expreſſed themſelves with greater eloquence. But what ſucceſs would Plato have, if he were to appear now in the company of ſenſible men, and if he repeated to them thoſe fine words, which are in his Timeus?

" Of diviſible and indiviſible ſubſtance, God " compoſed a third kind of ſubſtance, between both, " partaking of the nature of the *ſame and the other;* " then taking theſe three natures together, he mix- " ed them all into one form, and forced the nature " of the ſoul to mix with the nature of *the ſame;* " and having mixed them with the ſubſtance, and " of theſe three having made an agent, he divided " it nto proper portions; each of theſe portions " was mixed with the ſame and the other; and of " the ſubſtance, he made his diviſion "

He afterwards explains, with equal perſpicuity, the quaternity of Pythagoras. It muſt be acknowleged, that reaſonable men, who had lately read Locke upon the Human Underſtanding, would deſire Plato to go to his ſchool.

Theſe extravagancies of the good Plato do not prevent our frequently meeting with beautiful ideas

in his works. The Greeks had ſo much ſenſe, that they trifled with it. But what does them great honour is, that none of their governments confined men's thoughts: Socrates may, perhaps, be excepted, as his opinions coſt him his life: but he was leſs the victim of his opinions than of a violent party, who formed themſelves againſt him. The Athenians, indeed, made him drink gall; but we alſo know how much they repented of it: we know, that they puniſhed his accuſers, and that they erected a temple to him whom they had condemned. Athens did not only allow entire liberty to philoſophy, but to all kinds of religion. It received all foreign gods, and it had even an altar dedicated to the unknown gods.

It is inconteſtible, that the Greeks aknowleged a ſupreme God, as well as all the nations we have mentioned. Their Zeus, their Jupiter, was the maſter of gods and men. This opinion never changed ſince Orpheus: we meet with it a hundred times in Homer: all the other gods are ſubordinate. They may be compared to the Peris of the Perſians, and to the genii of the oriental nations. All Philoſophers, except the Stratonicians and the Epicureans, acknowleged the architect of the world, the Demiourgos.

We need not fear building too much upon this great hiſtorical truth, that the dawn of human reaſon adored ſome power which was judged to be ſuperior to common power, whether the ſun, the

moon, or the ſtars; that human reaſon being cultivated, notwithſtanding all its errors, adored a God, ſupreme maſter of the elements and the other gods; and that all the poliſhed people from the Indus to the extremities of Europe, believed, in general, a future ſtate: though many ſects of philoſophers were of a different opinion.

CHAP. XXVII.

Of Zaleucus and ſome other Legislators.

I Dare here defy all moraliſts and legiſlators, and I aſk them all, if they ever delivered any thing finer, or more uſeful, than the exordium of the laws of Zaleucus, who lived before Pythagoras, and who was the firſt magiſtrate of the Locrians?

"Every citizen ſhould be perſuaded of the exiſtence of the divinity. It is only neceſſary to obſerve the order and harmony of the univerſe, to be convinced that accident could not have formed it. We ſhould ſubdue the ſoul, purify it, and cleanſe it from all evil; in the perſuaſion that God cannot be well ſerved by thoſe of a perverſe diſpoſition; and that he does not reſemble thoſe wretched mortals, who let themſelves be wrought upon by magnificent ceremonies and ſumptuous offerings. Virtue alone, and a conſtant diſpoſition of doing good, can pleaſe him.

"Let us then endeavour to be juſt in our principles "and practice; we ſhall thereby become dear to "the divinity. Every one ſhould dread more what "leads to ignominy, than what leads to poverty. "He ſhould be looked upon as the beſt citizen, "who gives up his fortune for juſtice; but thoſe "whoſe violent paſſion lead them to evil, men, "women, citizens, common inhabitants, ſhould "be cautioned to remember the gods, and to think "often of the ſevere judgments which they exerciſe "againſt the wicked: let them have the hour of "their death before their eyes, the fatal hour "which awaits us all, the hour when the remem-"berance of faults brings on remorſe, and the vain "regret of not having let all our actions be ſwayed "by equity.

"Every one ſhould therefor conduct himſelf as "if this moment was the laſt of his life; but if an "evil genius prompts him to crimes, let him fly "to the foot of the altar, and implore heaven to "drive from him the ill-diſpoſed genius; let him "particularly throw himſelf into the arms of wor-"thy people, whoſe counſels will bring him back "to virtue, by repreſenting to him God's goodneſs "and his vengeance."

No; there is nothing in all antiquity that ſhould obtain a preference to this ſimple, but ſublime moral, dictated by reaſon and virtue, ſtripped of enthuſiaſm, and of thoſe gigantic figures, which good ſenſe diſowns.

Charondas, a diſciple of Zaleucus, explained himſelf in the ſame manner. The Plato's, Cicero's, and divine Antoninus's, have never ſince held any other language. Thus does Julian, who had the misfortune to give up the Chriſtian religion, but who did ſo much honour to that of nature, explain himſelf; that Julian, who was the ſcandal of our church, and the glory of the Roman empire

"The ignorant," ſays he, "ſhould be inſtructed, "and not puniſhed; they ſhould be pitied, and not "hated; the duty of an emperor is to imitate God; "to imitate him is to have the feweſt wants, and "to do him all the good that is poſſible."

Let thoſe who inſult antiquity, learn to be acquainted with it; let them not confound wiſe legiſlators with fabuliſts; let them know how to diſtinguiſh between the laws of the wiſeſt magiſtrates, and the ridiculous cuſtoms of the people; let them not ſay that ſuperſtitious ceremonies were invented, that falſe oracles and falſe prodigies were without number; and that all the magiſtrates of Greece and Rome who tolerated them, were blindly impoſed upon as well as impoſtors: this would be like ſaying there are bonzes in China who abuſe the populace, and that therefor the wiſe Confucius was a wretched impoſtor.

Men ſhould, in ſo enlightened an age as this, bluſh at thoſe declamations, which ignorance has ſo often promulgated againſt ſages, who ſhould be imitated, and not calumniated. Do we not know

that in every country the vulgar are imbecile, ſuperſtitious and inſenſible? Have there not been convulſionaries in the country of the chancellor de L'Hôpital, of Charon, Montagne, de la Motte, la Voyer, Deſcartes, Bayle, Fontenelle, and Monteſquieu? Are there not Methodiſts, Moravians. Millenarians, and fanatics of every kind, in that country which was ſo fortunate as to give birth to the chancellor Bacon, to thoſe immortal geniuſes, Newton and Locke, and to a multitude of great men?

CHAP. XXVIII.

Of BACCHUS

EXCEPT thoſe fables that are plainly allegorical, like that of the Muſes, or Venus, of the Graces, of Love, of Zephyrus, and Flora, and a few more of this kind; all the reſt are a jumble of tales that can have no other merit than that of having furniſhed Ovid and Quinaut with good verſes, and of having exerciſed the pencils of our beſt painters: but there is one that ſeems to deſerve the attention of thoſe who admire reſearches into antiquity; this is the fable of Bacchus.

Was this Bacchus, or Back, or Backos, or Dionyſios, ſon of God, a real perſonage? Many nations mention him as well as Hercules; ſo many different Hercules's and Bacchus's have been celebrated, that

it may be ſuppoſed that there was, in fact, one Bacchus, as well as one Hercules

It is certain, that in Ægypt, Aſia, and Greece, Bacchus as well as Hercules was acknowleged for a demi-god; that their feaſts were celebrated; that miracles were attributed to them; and that myſteries were inſtituted in the name of Bacchus before the Jewiſh books were known.

We know that the Jews did not communicate their books to foreigners, till the time of Ptolomy Philadelphus, about two hundred and thirty years before our æra. Now, before that time, the Eaſt and Weſt re-echoed with the orgies of Bacchus. The verſes that are attributed to the ancient Orpheus celebrated the conqueſts and good actions of this ſuppoſed demi-god. His hiſtory is ſo ancient, that the fathers of the church ſuppoſe Bacchus to have been Noah, becauſe Bacchus and Noah are both reckoned to have cultivated the vine.

Herodotus in relating the ancient opinions ſays, that Bacchus was an Ægyptian, brought up in Arabia Felix The Orphic verſes ſay, that he was ſaved from the waters in a ſmall box, which was called Miſem, in rememberance of this adventure; that he was inſtructed in the ſecrets of the gods; that he had a wand, which he changed into a ſerpent at will; that he paſſed the Red-Sea dry-footed, as Hercules did afterwards the ſtraits of Calhpolis and Abila in his juggler's box; that when he went into India, he and his army enjoyed the ſun-ſhine dur-

ing the night; that he touched, with his enchanting wand, the waters of the rivers Orontes and Hydaſpes; and that theſe waters ſeparated, and left him a free paſſage. It is even ſaid, that he ſtopped the courſe of the ſun and moon. He wrote his laws upon two ſtone tables. He was antiently repreſented with horns, or rays, which iſſued from his head.

After this, it is not ſurprizing, that ſeveral learned men, and particularly Bochart, and Huet latterly, ſhould ſuppoſe that Bacchus was a copy of Moſes and Joſhua. Every thing concurs to favour the reſemblance; for Bacchus was among the Ægyptians, called Arſaph, and amongſt the names which the fathers have given to Moſes, we find that of Oſaſirph.

Between theſe two hiſtories, which appear ſimilar in ſo many reſpects, it is not to be doubted that the hiſtory of Moſes is the real one, and that of Bacchus only the fable. But it appears that this fable was known to ſeveral nations long before the hiſtory of Moſes had reached them. No Greek author before Longinus, who lived under the emperor Aurelian, quoted Moſes; and all had celebrated Bacchus.

It appears inconteſtible, that the Greeks could not take the idea of Bacchus from the book of the Jewiſh laws, which they did not underſtand, and of which they had not the leaſt knowlege; a book, that was moreover ſo ſcarce, even amongſt the Jews,

that in the reign of king Joſias, there was only one copy to be found; a book that was almoſt entirely loſt during the ſlavery of the Jews, who were tranſported into Chaldea, and the other parts of Aſia; a book that was afterwards reſtored by Eſdras in the flouriſhing times of Athens, and the other Grecian republics; times when the myſteries of Bacchus were already inſtituted.

God then allowed that the ſpirit of untruth ſhould reveal the abſurdities of the life of Bacchus to a hundred nations, before the ſpirit of truth divulged the life of Moſes to any other people but the Jews,

The learned biſhop of Avranche, ſtruck with this ſurpriſing reſemblance, did not heſitate pronouncing, that Moſes was not only Bacchus, but the Thaut, the Oſiris of the Ægyptians. He even adds, * to remove any contradiction, that Moſes was alſo their Typhon, that is to ſay, that he was at the ſame time, the good and bad principle, the protector and the enemy, the God and the devil of the Ægyptians.

Moſes, according to this learned man, is the ſame as Zoroaſter. He is Eſculapius, Amphion, Apollo, Faunus, Janus, Perſeus, Romulus, Vertumnus, and, at laſt, Adonis and Priapus. The proof of his being Adonis, is that Virgil ſays,

Et formoſus oves ad flumina pavit Adonis,

And the ſheep were guarded by the fair Adonis.

* Propoſition 4. p. 79, and 87.

Now Moſes watched the ſheep towards Arabia. The proof of his being Priapus is ſtill better Priapus was ſometimes repreſented with an aſs, and the Jews were ſuppoſed to adore an aſs Huet adds, to complete the confirmation, that Moſes's rod might very well be compared to the ſcepter of Priapus:

Sceptrum Priapo tribuitur, virga Moſi.

This is what he calls demonſtration It is not, indeed, very geometrical. There is reaſon to believe that he bluſhed at it in the latter part of his life; and that he recollected his demonſtration, when he wrote his Treatiſe upon the Weakneſs of the Human Mind and of the Uncertainty of its Knowlege.

CHAP. XXIX.

Of the METAMORPHOSES amongſt the GREEKS, collected by OVID.

THE opinion of the tranſmigration of ſouls naturally leads to metamorphoſes, as we have already ſeen. Every idea that ſtrikes the imagination, and amuſes it, preſently ſpreads throughout the world. As ſoon as you have perſuaded me, that my ſoul can enter into the body of a horſe, it will

not be difficult for you to make me believe, that my body may be alſo changed into a horſe.

The metamorphoſes collected by Ovid, which we have already ſlightly touched upon, ſhould, in no reſpect, aſtoniſh a Pythagorean, a Bramin, a Chaldean, or an Ægyptian. The gods were changed into animals in ancient Ægypt. Derceto was become a fiſh in Syria; Semiramis was changed into a dove in Babylon. The Jews write in much more earlier times, that Nabucodonoſor was changed into a bull, without including Lot's wife, who was transformed into a pillar of ſalt. Are not the apparitions of gods and genii in human ſhape real though tranſitory metamorphoſes?

A god cannot well commune with us, unleſs he be metamorphoſed into man. It is true that Jupiter took upon him the figure of a beautiful ſwan to enjoy Leda. But theſe caſes are ſeldom met with; and in all religions the divinity takes upon him a human ſhape, when he comes to give orders. It would be difficult to underſtand the voice of gods, if they appeared in the ſhape of bears or crocodiles.

In fine, the gods metamorphoſed themſelves in almoſt every place; and as ſoon as we were inſtructed in the ſecrets of magic, we metamorphoſed ourſelves. Many credible people transformed themſelves into wolves; and the word *wolf-man* is ſtill a proof amongſt us of this metamorphoſis.

What gives weight to the belief of all theſe pro-

digies and tranſmutations, is that no formal proof can be given of their impoſſibility. There is no argument to be oppoſed, if a perſon ſhould aver that a god came yeſterday to my houſe in the figure of a handſome young man, and my daughter will be brought to bed in nine months of a beautiful child that the god had deigned to confer upon her. My brother, who was ſo daring as to doubt the fact, was turned into a wolf: he actually went into the woods and howled. If the girl is really brought to-bed, if the man who is changed into a wolf affirms that he has actually undergone this metamorphoſis, you can not demonſtrate that the thing is not true. The only reſource left you is to ſummon before a judge the young man, who counterfeited a god, and impregnated the young lady; and to watch the uncle, the *wolf-man*, and get witneſſes of the impoſture: but the family will not expoſe themſelves to this examination; they will maintain with the prieſts of the Canton, that you are a prophane ignorant man; they will ſhew you that ſince a caterpillar can be changed into a butterfly, a man with equal facility may be changed into a beaſt; and, if you diſpute, you will be impeached at the inquiſition of the country, as an impious wretch, who neither believes in *men-wolves*, nor in gods, who get girls with child.

CHAP. XXX.

Of Idolatry.

AFTER having read all that has been written upon idolatry, there is nothing that communicates a preciſe idea of it. It ſeems that Locke was the firſt who taught men to define the words they uttered, and not talk at random. The term that anſwers to idolatry is not to be found in any ancient language; it is an expreſſion of the Greeks of the laſt ages, which was never in uſe before the ſecond century of our æra. It ſignifies the adoration of images; it is a term of reproach, an injurious word; no people ever took upon themſelves the title of Idolaters; no government ever ordained that the people ſhould adore an image, as the ſupreme God of nature. The ancient Chaldeans, the ancient Arabians, the ancient Perſians, had, for a long time, neither images nor temples. How could thoſe who venerated in the ſun, the ſtars, and fire, the emblems of the divinity, be called idolaters? they revered what they ſaw. But ſurely revering the ſun and the ſtars is not adoring a moulded image, made by a workman; this is following an erroneous doctrine, but this is not idolatry.

Suppoſe that the Ægyptians really adored the dog Anubis, and the bull Apis: that they were fools

enough to conſider them as not animals conſecrated to the divinity, and as an emblem of the good, which their Iſheth and their Iſis did unto man, but really believed that a celeſtial ray animated the conſecrated ox and dog; it is evident this was not adoring a ſtatue. A beaſt is not an idol.

Men had, doubtleſs, objects of devotion before they had ſculptors; and it is clear that thoſe men who were ſo ancient could not be called idolaters. It remains then to know, if thoſe who afterwards placed ſtatues in the temples, and who made theſe ſtatues be revered, called themſelves adorers of ſtatues, and their people the adorers of ſtatues. This certainly is not to be found in any monument of antiquity.

But without taking upon themſelves the title of idolaters, were they really ſo in fact? Was it ordained that they ſhould believe that the brazen ſtatue, which repreſented the fantaſtical figures of Bel and Babylon, was the maſter, the God, the creator of the world? was the figure of Jupiter, Jupiter himſelf? is not this (if it be allowed to compare the cuſtoms of our holy religion with the cuſtoms of antiquity) like ſaying that we adore the figure of a dove? theſe are emblematical ornaments in our temples. We adore them ſo little, that aſſoon as theſe ſtatues, when of wood, begin to rot, we turn them into fuel: they are nothing more than advertiſements dedicated to the eyes and the imagination. The Turks, and thoſe of the reformed church,

think that the catholics are idolaters; but the catholics inceſſantly proteſt againſt this injurious accuſation.

It is impoſſible really to adore a ſtatue, or to believe that any ſtatue can be the ſupreme God. There was but one Jupiter, but there are a thouſand ſtatues of him. Now, this Jupiter, who was thought to dart his lightening, was ſuppoſed to inhabit the clouds, or mount Olympus, or the planet which bears his name. His emblems did not dart lightening, and were neither in a planet, in the clouds, nor upon mount Olympus. All prayers were dedicated to the immortal Gods, and aſſuredly the ſtatues were not immortal.

Cheats, no doubt, made it to be believed, and the ſuperſtitious did believe, that ſtatues had ſpoken. How often have our ignorant people had the ſame credulity! But theſe abſurdities were never, amongſt any people, the religion of the ſtate, Some ſtupid old women may not have diſtinguiſhed the ſtatue from the god; this is no reaſon for maintaining that the government thought like this old woman. The magiſtrates were willing that the repreſentation of the gods they adored ſhould be revered, and that the attention of the people ſhould be fixed by theſe viſible ſigns. This is preciſely the ſame thing that is done by half Europe. We have figures that repreſent God the father, under the form of an old man, and we know very well that God is not an old man. We have the images of ſeveral ſaints,

whom we revere, and we know very well that theſe ſaints are not God the Father,

In the ſame manner, if I may be allowed to ſay it, the ancients did not confound the demi-gods, the gods, and the maſter of the gods. If the antients were idolaters for having ſtatues in their temples, one half of Chriſtendom are alſo idolaters; and, if they are not, the ancient nations were not ſo either.

In a word, there is not in all antiquity a ſingle poet, a ſingle philoſopher, a ſingle man of any rank, who has ſaid that ſtone, marble, braſs, or wood, ſhould be adored. There are innumerable teſtimonies to the contrary; idolatrous nations are then like ſorcerers; they are ſpoken of, but they never exiſted.

A commentator has concluded that the ſtatue of Priapus was really adored, becauſe Horace, in making a ſcarecrow ſpeak, put theſe words into his mouth, "I was formerly a log; the workman, "doubtful whether he ſhould make a god or a joint "ſtool, reſolved to make a god of it, etc." The commentator quotes the prophet Baruc, to prove that, in the time of Horace, the figure of Priapus was looked upon as a real divinity. He does not perceive that Horace makes a joke both of the pretended god and the ſtatue. It might happen that one of his ſervants, obſerving this enormous figure, thought that there was ſomething divine in it; but ſurely all thoſe wooden Priapus's, with which the

gardens were filled to ſcare birds, were not looked upon as the creators of the world.

It is ſaid that Moſes, notwithſtanding the divine law which forbad the making of the repreſentation of men or animals, erected a brazen ſerpent, which was an imitation of the ſilver ſerpent carried by the Egyptian prieſts in proceſſion; but though this ſerpent was made to cure the bites of real ſerpents, it was not, however, adored. Solomon placed two cherubims in the temple; but theſe cherubims were not looked upon as gods. If then, in the temple of the Jews, and in our temples, ſtatues have been reſpected without idolatry, why ſhould other nations be ſo much reproached? We ſhould either abſolve them, or they ſhould accuſe us.

CHAP. XXXI.

Of Oracles.

IT is evident we cannot be acquainted with futurity, becauſe we cannot be acquainted with what does not exiſt; but it is alſo clear that conjectures may be formed of an event.

You ſee a numerous and well-diſciplined army, conducted by a ſkilful chief, advancing in an advantageous place, againſt an imprudent captain, followed by only a few troops, badly armed, badly

poſted, and half of whom you know to be traitors; you foretel that this captain will be defeated.

You have obſerved that a young man and a young woman are deſperately fond of each other; you ſaw each of them come from their own home; you announce that in a ſhort time this girl will be with child; you cannot be much miſtaken. All predictions are reduced to the calculation of probabilities: there is therefor no nation in which ſome predictions have not been made that have come to paſs. The moſt celebrated and beſt atteſted, is that which the traitor Flavian Joſephus made to Veſpaſian and Titus his ſon, the conquerors of the Jews. He ſaw Veſpaſian and Titus adored by the Roman armies in the Eaſt, and Nero deteſted by the whole empire. He had the audacity, in order to obtain the good graces of Veſpaſian, to predict to him, in the name of the God of the Jews*, that he and his ſon would become emperors. They, in effect, were ſo; but it is evident that Joſephus ran no riſque. If the day of Veſpaſian's overthrow had come, he would not have been in a ſituation to puniſh Joſephus: if he obtained the imperial throne, he muſt recompenſe his prophet; and till ſuch a time as he reigned, he was in hopes of doing it. Veſpaſian informed this Joſephus, that, if he were a prophet, he ſhould have foretold him the loſs of Jotapat, which he had ineffectually defended againſt the Roman

* Joſeph. Book iii. chap. 28.

army: Joſephus replied, that he had in fact foretold it, which was not very ſurpriſing: what commander, who ſuſtains a ſiege in a ſmall place againſt a numerous army, does not foretel that the place will be taken?

It was not very difficult to diſcover that reſpect and money might be drawn from the multitude by playing the prophet, and the credulity of the people muſt be a revenue for any who knew how to cheat them. There were in all places ſoothſayers; but it was not ſufficient to foretel in their own name, it was neceſſary to ſpeak in the name of the divinity; and from the time of the prophets of Egypt who called themſelves ſeers, till the time of Ulpius, who was prophet to the favourite of the empire Adrian, who became a god, there was a prodigious number of ſacred quacks, who made the gods ſpeak, to make a jeſt of man. It is well known how they might ſucceed; ſometimes by an ambiguous reply, which they afterwards explained as they pleaſed; at other times, by corrupting ſervants, and thereby penetrating the ſecrets of thoſe devotees, who came to conſult them. An idiot was greatly aſtoniſhed that a cheat ſhould tell him of what he had done in the moſt hidden manner.

Theſe prophets were reckoned to know the paſt, the preſent and the future: this is the elogium which Homer makes upon Calchas. I ſhall add nothing upon this place to what the learned Vandale and the judicious Fontenelle his reviſer, have ſaid of

oracles; they have ſagaciouſly convicted the ages of impoſture; and the jeſuit Balthus diſplayed very little ſenſe, or much malignity, when he ſupported, in oppoſition to them, the truth of the Pagan oracles, upon the principles of the Chriſtian religion. It was really doing God an injury, to ſuppoſe this God of goodneſs and truth had let looſe the devils from hell, to come upon earth, and there perform what he does not exerciſe himſelf, in order to produce oracles.

Either theſe devils uttered truths, and in that caſe it was impoſſible not to believe them; and God himſelf, ſupporting every kind of falſe religion by daily miracles, gave the world up to his enemy's will; or elſe they ſpoke falſe; and in this caſe, God muſt have unfettered the devils to deceive all mankind. There never was, perhaps, a more abſurd opinion.

The moſt famous oracle was that of Delphos. They at firſt choſe innocent young girls, as more proper than any other to be inſpired; that is to ſay, to utter with faith, all the nonſenſe the prieſts dictated to them. The young Pythia mounted a tripod, fixed in the opening of a cavity, from whence a prophetic exhalation iſſued. The divine ſpirit made its way under the rope of the Pythia by a channel that is quite human; but a young Pythia having been run away with by a devotee, an old woman ſupplied the young one's place to carry on the trade; and I believe, that upon this account,

the oracle of Delphos began to loſe much of its credit.

Divinations and auguries were a kind of oracles, and are, I believe, of higher antiquity; for many ceremonies were neceſſary, much time was required, to draw cuſtom to a divine oracle, that could not do without a temple and prieſts; and nothing was eaſier than to tell fortunes in the croſs-ways. This art was ſubdivided into a thouſand ſhapes; predictions were extracted from the flight of birds, ſheep's livers, the lines of the palm of the hand, circles drawn upon the ground, water, fire, ſmall flints, wands, and, in a word, from every thing that could be deviſed, and frequently from enthuſiaſm alone, which ſupplied the place of all rules. But who invented this art? The firſt rogue that met with a fool.

The greateſt part of the predictions were like thoſe of the Liege Almanac; "A great man will "depart this life. Storms will ariſe." Does a village magiſtrate die within a twelvemonth? this was the great man, with reſpect to that village, whoſe death was foretold. Is a fiſhing boat ſtranded? theſe are the violent ſtorms predicted. The author of the Liege Almanac is a forcerer, whether his predictions are or are not accompliſhed; for if any event favours them, his magic is demonſtrated; if the events are oppoſite, the prediction is applied to a quite different thing, and he ſaves himſelf allegorically.

The Liege Almanac has told us that there would come a people from the North, who would deſtroy

every thing; this people did not come, but a north wind froze up ſome of our vines; this was what was predicted by Matthew Lanſberg. Does any one dare to doubt of his knowlege? the hawkers would as ſoon arraign him for a bad citizen, or the aſtrologers treat him as a man of ſhallow parts and little reaſon.

The Mahometan Sunnites have greatly availed themſelves of this method, in their explanation of Mahomet's Koran. Aldebaran's ſtar was in great veneration amongſt the Arabians; it ſignifies the ox's eye; this meant that Mahomet's eye would enlighten the Arabians, and that, likean ox, he would ſtrike his enemies with his horns.

The acacian tree was in eſteem in Arabia; great hedges were made of it, to preſerve the crops from the heat of the ſun: Mahomet is the acacia, who is to cover the earth with his ſalutary ſhade. The ſenſible Turks laugh at theſe ſubtle ſtupidities; the young women do not think about them; the old female devotees firmly believe them; and he who ſhould ſay to a dervis, that he teaches nonſenſe, would run the riſque of being impaled. There have been learned men who have traced the hiſtory of their own times in the Iliad and Odyſſey; but theſe learned men did not acquire the ſame fortune as the commentators of the Koran.

The moſt brilliant function of the oracles was to inſure a victory in war. Each army, each nation, had its own peculiar oracles, who promiſed triumphs.

The oraculous intelligence of one of the parties was infallibly true. The vanquiſhed, who had been deceived, attributed their defeat to ſome fault committed towards the gods, after the oracle had been conſulted, and they hoped the oracle's prediction would another time be accompliſhed Thus is almoſt the whole earth fed with illuſion. There were ſcarce any people who did not preſerve in their archives, or who had not, by oral tradition, ſome prediction which inſured them the conqueſt of the neighbouring nations. No conqueror ever gained a victory, without its being predicted in form, as ſoon as the battle was over. Even the Jews who were ſhut up in a corner of the earth, almoſt unknown, between Anti-libanus and Arabia Deſerta and Petræa, hoped, like the other people, to be the maſters of the univerſe, upon the foundation of a thouſand oracles, which we explain in a myſtical ſenſe, but which they underſtood quite literally.

CHAP XXXII.

Of the Sibyls amongſt the Greeks, and of their influence upon other Nations.

WHEN almoſt the whole earth was crammed with oracles, there were old maids, who, without belonging to any temple, thought proper to propheſy upon their own account. They were

called Sibyls, a Greek word of the Laconic dialect, which ſignified council of God. According to antiquity, there were ten chiefs of them in different countries. The ſtory of the good woman, who came to Rome, and brought the ancient Tarquin the nine books of the ancient Sibyls of Cuma, is pretty well known. As Tarquin bargained too much, the old woman threw the ſix firſt books into the fire, and inſiſted upon as much money for the three remaining ones as ſhe had aſked for the nine all together. Tarquin payed her. They were, it is ſaid, preſerved at Rome, till the time of Sylla, when they were conſumed in the conflagration of the Capitol.

But how could the prophecies of the Sibyls be diſpenſed with? Three ſenators were diſpatched to Erythræa, a city of Greece, where a thouſand bad Grecian verſes were preciouſly kept, becauſe they were reputed to be the production of the Sibyl of Erythræa. Every one was anxious to obtain copies of them; the Sibyl of Erythræa had foretold every thing. Her prophecies were conſidered in the ſame light as thoſe of Noſtradamus with us. Upon every remarkable event, ſome Greek verſes were forged, which were attributed to the Sibyl.

Auguſtus, who had juſt reaſon to fear that in theſe rhapſodies ſome verſes would be met with that authorized conſpiracies, forbad, upon pain of death, any Roman to keep Sibyline verſes by him: a pro-

hibition worthy of a ſuſpicious tyrant, who, by addreſs, preſerved a power uſurped by crimes.

The Sibyline verſes were in greater eſteem than ever when the reading of them was forbid. They muſt needs have contained truths as they were concealed to the citizens.

Virgil, in his eclogue upon the birth of Pollio, or Marcellus, or Druſus, failed not to cite the authority of the Sibyl of Cuma, who had fairly foretold that the child, who ſhould ſoon after die, would reſtore the golden age. The Sibyl of Erythræa had, it was then ſaid, propheſied at Cuma. The prediction of the new-born infant belonging to Auguſtus, or to his favourite, muſt neceſſarily have taken place. Beſides, predictions are never made but for the great; the vulgar are unworthy of them.

Theſe oracles of the Sibyls, being then always in great reputation, the firſt Chriſtians, being too much carried away by falſe zeal, imagined that they might forge ſimilar oracular predictions, in order to defeat the Gentiles with their own arms. Hermas and St. Juſtin are reputed the firſt who ſupported this impoſture. St Juſtin cites the oracles of the Sibyl of Cuma, promulgated by a Chriſtian, who had taken the name of Iſtapus, and pretended that his Sibyl had lived in the time of the deluge. * St. Clement of Alexandria, in his Stormates, aſſures

* Strom, lib. 6.

us that the apoſtle St. Paul recommends in his epiſtles, "the reading of the Sibyls, who have manifeſtly foretold the birth of the ſon of God."

Theſe epiſtles of St. Paul muſt neceſſarily be loſt; for none of theſe words, nor any like them, are to be found in any of the epiſtles of St. Paul. An infinite number of books, which we are now no longer poſſeſſed of, were then diſperſed amongſt the Chriſtians, ſuch as the prophecies of Jaldabaſth, thoſe of Seth, Enoch, and Kamla; Adam's penances; the hiſtory of Zachariah, father to St. John; the evangeliſt of the Ægyptians, the evangeliſt of St. Peter, of Andrew, of James, the evangeliſt of Eve, Apocalypſe of Adam, the letters of Jeſus Chriſt, and a hundred other writings, of which remain ſcarce any fragments; and theſe are buried in books that are very rarely read.

The Chriſtian religion was then divided into a Jewiſh ſociety, and a Non-Jewiſh ſociety. Theſe two were ſubdivided into many others. Whoever was poſſeſſed of any degree of talents wrote for his party. There were upwards of fifty evangeliſts till the council of Nice; and at preſent, there remain only thoſe of the Virgin, the Infancy, and Nicodemus. Verſes attributed to the Sibyls were particularly forged. Such was the reſpect the people paid for theſe Sibyline oracles, that this foreign ſupport was judged neceſſary to ſtrengthen the dawn of Chriſtianity. Not only Greek Sibyline verſes were made, which foretold Jeſus Chriſt; but they

were formed in acroſtics, ſo that the letters of theſe words, *Jeſous Chreiſtos ïos Soter*, followed each other at the beginning of every verſe. Amongſt theſe poems we meet with this prediction:

With five loaves and two fiſhes,
He ſhall nouriſh five thouſand men in the deſert,
And by collecting the morſels that remain,
He ſhall fill twelve baſkets.

They did not confine themſelves to this: it was imagined that the ſenſe of the verſes of the fourth eclogue of Virgil might be turned in favour of Chriſtianity.

Ultima Cumæi venit jam carminis ætas;
Jam nova progenies cœlo demittitur alto.

The baſe degenerate iron offſpring ends;
A golden progeny from heav'n deſcends.

This opinion was ſo much circulated in the firſt ages of the church, that the emperor Conſtantine vehemently ſupported it When an emperor ſpoke he was ſurely in the right. Virgil was, for a long time, conſidered as a prophet. The oracles of the Sibyls were at length ſo thoroughly believed, that in one of our hymns, which is not very ancient, we have theſe two remarkable verſes.

Solvet ſæculum in favilla
Teſte David cum Sibylla.

He will reduce the univerſe to aſhes,
As David and the Sibyl teſtify.

Amongſt the productions attributed to the Sibyls, the Millenneum was particularly eſteemed, and which was adopted by the fathers of the church, till the time of Theodoſius the ſecond.

This Millennium of Jeſus Chriſt upon earth was at firſt founded on the prophecy of St Luke (chap. xxi.) a prophecy that has been miſunderſtood, "that Jeſus would come in the clouds with great power and majeſty, before the preſent generation was gone." The generation had paſſed; but St. Paul had alſo ſaid in his epiſtle to the Theſſalonians, chap. iv. "For this we ſay unto you, by the word "of the Lord, that we which are alive, and remain "unto the coming of the Lord, ſhall not prevent "them which are aſleep. For the Lord himſelf "ſhall deſcend from heaven with a ſhout, with the "voice of the archangel, and with the trump of "God: and the dead in Chriſt ſhall riſe firſt: "Then we which are alive and remain ſhall be "caught up in the clouds, to meet the Lord in "the air: and ſo ſhall we ever be with the Lord."

It is very ſtrange that Paul ſays, that the Lord himſelf ſpoke unto him; for Paul, ſo far from having been one of the diſciples of Chriſt, had for a long time been one of his perſecutors. Though he might be one, the Apocalypſe alſo ſaid, chap. xx. "that the juſt ſhould reign upon earth for a thou-"ſand years with Jeſus Chriſt."

It was therefor every moment expected that Jeſus Chriſt would deſcend from heaven to eſtabliſh his

reign, and rebuild Jeruſalem, wherein the Chriſtians were to rejoice with the patriarchs.

This new Jeruſalem was foretold in the Apocalypſe. "I John ſaw the new Jeruſalem, which "deſcended from heaven, decked out like a bride. "—It had a large and high wall, twelve gates, "and an angel at each gate—twelve foundations, "—whereon are to be inſcribed the names of the "apoſtles of the Lamb—He that ſpake unto me had "a golden fathom to meaſure—the city, the gates, "and the wall. The city is a ſquare building, "twelve thouſand furlongs in circumference; its "length, breadth, and height, are all equal.— "He alſo meaſured with it the wall, which is a "hundred and forty-four cubits high—this wall "was made of jaſper, and the city was made of "gold, etc."

This prediction might have ſufficed; but a voucher was thought neceſſary, who was a Sibyl, and made to ſay nearly the ſame things. This belief was ſo ſtrongly imprinted on the people's minds, that St. Juſtin in his dialogue againſt Triphon, ſays, "he is convinced, and that Jeſus is to come into "that Jeruſalem, and drink and eat with his diſciples."

St. Ireneus ſo compleatly adopted this opinion, that he attributes theſe words to St. John the Evangeliſt. "In new Jeruſalem, every vine ſhall "produce ten thouſand branches, and every branch "ten thouſand buds, and every bud ten thouſand

" bunches, and every bunch ten thouſand grapes,
" and every grape ten thouſand amphors of wine:
" and when any of the holy vintagers ſhall gather
" a grape, the next grape ſhall ſay to him, Take
" me, I am better than he.*"

It was not ſufficient that the Sibyl had predicted thoſe miracles,—there were witneſſes of their being fulfilled. Tertullian relates, that the new Jeruſalem was ſeen forty ſucceſſive nights to deſcend from heaven.

Tertullian expreſſes himſelf thus:† " We confeſs
" that the kingdom is promiſed to us for a thou-
" ſand years upon earth, after the reſurrection in
" the city of Jeruſalem brought down from heaven
" thither."

Thus has a love of the marvellous, and a deſire of hearing and ſpeaking extraordinary things, at all times, perverted common ſenſe. Thus has fraud been brought into play, when force could not be produced. The Chriſtian religion was, in other reſpects, ſupported by ſuch ſolid reaſons, that all this jumble of errors could not ſhake it. The pure gold was extracted from this alloy, and the church, by degrees, arrived at the ſtate where we now ſee it.

* Ireneus, chap. xxv. b. v. † Tert. againſt Marcion. b. 3.

CHAP. XXXIII.

Of Miracles.

LET us never loſe ſight of the nature of man: it loves nothing but what is extraordinary, and this is ſo true, that as ſoon as the beautiful and ſublime become familiar, they are no longer beautiful and ſublime. We require uncommon things of every kind; and, in this purſuit, we break down the fences of poſſibility. Ancient hiſtory reſembles the hiſtory of the cabbage, which was larger than a houſe, and of the pot, bigger than a church, in which it was to be boiled.

What idea have we affixed to the word *miracle*, which at firſt ſignified ſomething admirable? We have ſaid, that what nature cannot produce is contrary to all it's laws. So the Engliſhman, who promiſed the people of London to get whole into a quart bottle, promiſed a miracle. And legend-makers would not formerly have been wanting to affirm the accompliſhment of this prodigy, if it had produced any thing to the convent.

We believe, without difficulty, the real miracles operated in our holy religion, and amongſt the Jews, whoſe religion paved the way for ours. We ſpeak in this place only of other nations, and we

reaſon only according to the rules of good ſenſe, ever ſubordinate to revelation.

Whoever is wanting in the light of faith, cannot conſider a miracle as any thing elſe than a contradiction to the eternal laws of nature It does not appear poſſible to him that God ſhould diſturb his own work: he knows that every thing in nature is concatenated by indiſſoluble chains. He knows that God being immutable, his laws are the ſame, and that no one wheel of the whole machine can be ſtopped, without nature's ſelf being diſordered.

If Jupiter in lying with Alcmena makes a night of twenty-four hours, when it ſhould conſiſt of only twelve, the earth muſt neceſſarily be ſtopt in its courſe, and remain motionleſs twelve whole hours. But as the uſual phænomena appeared the ſucceeding night, the moon and the other planets muſt conſequently have been ſtopped in their courſe. This would have been a very great revolution in the celeſtial orbs, in favour of a woman of Thebes in Beotia.

A dead man comes to life after being breathleſs for ſome days; all the imperceptible particles of his body, which were exhaled in the air, and which had been carried away by the wind, muſt have returned exactly to their former ſtation, and the worms, birds, or other animals, which were nouriſhed with the ſubſtance of this carcaſs, muſt each of them reſtore what he had taken from it. The worms, fattened with the intrails of this man, muſt have been eaten by ſwallows, theſe ſwallows by mag-

pies, theſe magpies by falcons, the ſefalcons by vultures. Each one muſt reſtore preciſely what belonged to the corps, without which it could not be the ſame perſon. And all this is nothing, without the ſoul returns to its former manſion.

If the Eternal Being, who has foreſeen all things, arranged all things, who governs all things by immutable laws, acts contrary to his own deſign by ſubverting thoſe laws, this can be only ſuppoſed to take place for the benefit of all nature. But it appears contradictory to ſuppoſe a ſingle caſe, wherein the creator and maſter of all things could change the order of the world for the benefit of the world; for he either foreſaw the ſuppoſed neceſſity there would be before the change, or elſe he did not ſee it. If he did foreſee, the neceſary regulations were made in the beginning; if he did not foreſee, he is no longer God.

It is averred that to pleaſe a nation, a city, or a family, the Supreme Being made Pelops, Hippolitus, Heres, and ſome other famous perſonages riſe from the dead; but it does not ſeem probable, that the common maſter of the univerſe ſhould forget the care of that univerſe, in favour of this Hippolitus, or this Pelops.

The more incredible miracles are (according to our weak intellects) the more readily they have met with belief. Every people had ſo many prodigies, that they became very common things; nor did they think it prudent to deny thoſe of their neigh-

bours. The Greeks ſaid to the Ægyptians and Aſiatic nations, the gods ſpoke to you ſometimes, they ſpeak to us every day; if they have fought twenty times for you, they have put themſelves forty times at the head of our armies. If you have metamorphoſes, we have a hundred times more than you. If your animals ſpeak, ours have made very elegant orations. There are no people, even down to the Romans, among whom beaſts have not had the power of ſpeech, to foretel future events. Titus Livius relates, that an ox cried out in the public market-place when full of people, "Rome, take care "of thyſelf." Pliny in his eighth book ſays, that a dog ſpoke, when Tarquin was driven from the throne. If Suetonius is to be credited, a crow cried out in the Capitol, when Domitian was going to be aſſaſſinated, *Eſtai panta Kalos*, very well done, *all is well*. In the ſame manner one of Achilles's horſes, named Xante, foretold to his maſter, that he ſhould fall before Troy. Before Achilles's horſe, Phrixus's ram had ſpoke, as well as the cows upon Mount Olympus. So that inſtead of refuting fables, they were improved upon. This was like the council whoſe client had a bond forged upon him; he did not amuſe himſelf with pleadings, he immediately produced a forged receipt.

It is true we do not meet with many reſurrections amongſt the Romans; they confined themſelves to miraculous cures. The Greeks, more attached to the metempſichoſis, had many reſurrections. They

had this ſecret from the people of the Eaſt, from whom all ſcience and ſuperſtition are derived.

Of all the miraculous cures, the beſt atteſted, and moſt authentic, are thoſe of the blind man, whom the emperor Veſpaſian reſtored to ſight, and the paralytic who by this monarch's aid recovered the uſe of his limbs. It is in Alexandria that this double miracle operates, before innumerable ſpectators, before Romans, Greeks, and Ægyptians. It is upon his tribunal, that Veſpaſian operates theſe prodigies. He does not endeavour to gain eſteem by impoſture, which is unneceſſary to a monarch who is firmly ſeated on his throne; but the two patients proſtrate themſelves at his feet, and conjure him to cure them; he bluſhes at their intreaties, ridicules them, ſaying that ſuch cures are not in the power of mortals. They inſiſt upon it: Serapis has appeared to them; Serapis has told them they ſhall be cured by Veſpaſian. He at length lets himſelf be prevailed upon; he touches them without being flattered with ſucceſs. The divinity, favouring his modeſty and virtue, communicates to Veſpaſian his power; that inſtant the blind man ſees, and the lame man walks. Alexandria, Ægypt, all the empire, applaud Veſpaſian, favoured by heaven. The miracle is preſerved in the archives of the empire, and in all the cotemporary hiſtories. This miracle has nevertheleſs in courſe of time been diſbelieved by every one, becauſe no one is intereſted in ſupporting its credit.

If we believe I know not what ſort of a writer of our barbarous ages, named *Helgaut*, king Robert, ſon of Huges Capet, alſo cured a blind man. This miraculous gift was probably given to Robert, to requite the charity wherewith he burnt his wife's confeſſor, and the canons of Orleans, who were accuſed of not believing the infallibility and abſolute power of the pope, and conſequently of being Manicheans; or if this was not the recompence of this good action, it was to indemnify him, for the excommunication which he ſuffered, for lying with the queen his wife.

Philoſophers have made miracles in the ſame manner as emperors and kings. We are acquainted with thoſe of Apollonius Tyaneus; he was a Pythagorean philoſopher, temperate, chaſte, and juſt, who is not reproached by hiſtory with any equivocal action, nor any of thoſe weakneſſes with which Socrates is ſtigmatized. He travelled amongſt the Magi and Bramins; and was the more honoured every where, on account of his modeſty, inceſſantly giving wiſe counſel, and ſeldom diſputing. The conſtant prayer, which he preferred to the gods, was admirable: "Immortal Gods! grant unto us "what you think is needful, and which we are not "unworthy of." He was no enthuſiaſt; but his diſciples were enthuſiaſts; they attributed miracles to him, which were collected by Philoſtrates. The Tyaneans placed him amongſt the demi-gods, and the Roman emperors approved of his apotheoſis.

But in time, the apotheoſis of Apollonius had the ſame fate as that which was decreed the Roman emperors; and the chapel of Apollonius was equally deſerted as the Socrateion, which was erected by the Athenians to Socrates.

The kings of England from the time of St. Edward, to the time of William III. daily performed a great miracle, which was to cure the evil, which phyſicians could not remove. But William III. would perform no miracles, and his ſucceſſors have followed his example in abſtaining from them. If England ſhould ever undergo any great revolution whereby that nation will be ſunk again in ignorance, the Engliſh will then have miracles operated every day.

CHAP. XXXIV.

Of the Temples.

TEMPLES were not erected ſo ſoon as a God was acknowleged. The Arabians, the Chaldeans, the Perſians, who revered the ſtars, could ſcarce have conſecrated edifices immediately; they could only look up to heaven: this was their temple. That of Bel at Babylon is eſteemed the moſt ancient of all; but thoſe of Brama in India muſt be of more remote antiquity; this is, at leaſt, ſuppoſed by the Bramins.

We find in the annals of China, that the firſt

emperors ſacrificed in a temple. That of Hercules at Tyre does not appear to be amongſt the moſt ancient. Hercules was never conſidered by any people, but as a ſecondary divinity: the temple of Tyre is of much anterior date to that of Judea. Hiram had a very magnificent one, when Solomon, aſſiſted by Hiram, built his own. Herodotus, who travelled amongſt the Tyrians, ſays, that in his time, according to the archives of Tyre, the antiquity of this temple was but two thouſand three hundred years. Ægypt was full of temples for a long time. Herodotus alſo ſays, that the temple of Vulcan at Memphis had been erected by Menes about the time that correſponds to three thouſand years before our æra: and it is incredible that the Ægyptians had erected a temple to Vulcan, before they had beſtowed one upon Iſis, their principal divinity.

I cannot reconcile with the common manners of men what Herodotus ſays in his ſecond book: he avers that it was cuſtomary with all the other people, except the Ægyptians and the Greeks, to lie with their wives in the middle of their temples. I ſuſpect, that the Greek text has been corrupted; the moſt ſavage of men abſtain from this action before witneſſes. No man was ever known to careſs his wife, or his miſtreſs, in the preſence of any for whom he had the ſmalleſt regard.

It is ſcarce poſſible that amongſt ſo many nations, who were the moſt ſcrupulouſly religious, all the

temples ſhould be places of proſtitution. I believe Herodotus meant to ſay, that the prieſts, who inhabited the incloſure which ſurrounded the temple, might lie with their wives in that incloſure, which was called the temple, as did the Jewiſh and other prieſts; that the Ægyptian prieſts, who did not dwell within that encloſure, abſtained from touching their wives when they were upon guard in the porches with which the temple was ſurrounded.

The people who were leſs numerous were a long time before they had temples. They carried their gods in boxes and tabernacles. We have already ſeen, that when the Jews inhabited the eaſtern deſerts of the lake Aſphaltides, they carried the tabernacle of the god Rempham, of the god Moloc, of the god Kiam, according to Jeremiah, Amos, and St. Stephen.

This cuſtom was practiſed by all the little nations of the Deſert. This uſage muſt be the moſt ancient of any, becauſe it is much eaſier to have a box than to erect a great edifice.

Theſe portable gods, probably, gave riſe to the cuſtom of the proceſſions, which took place with every nation: for it appears that it would not have been judged right to take a god out of his place in his temple, to carry him about the city; and this violence might have been looked upon as a ſacrilege, if the ancient cuſtom of carrying one's god in a cart, or upon a litter, had not been for a long time eſtabliſhed.

The greateſt part of the temples were, at firſt, citadels, wherein ſacred things were ſecurely depoſited. Thus the Palladium was in the fortreſs of Troy; and the bucklers which deſcended from heaven were kept in the Capitol.

We find that the temple of the Jews was a ſtrong houſe capable of ſuſtaining an aſſault. It is ſaid in the third book of Kings, that the edifice was ſixty cubits in length, and twenty in breadth, which is about ninety feet long and thirty wide. There are ſcarce any public edifices ſmaller But this houſe being built of ſtone, upon a mountain, might, at leaſt, defend itſelf againſt a ſurprize; the windows, which were much ſmaller without than within, looked like ſlaughtering holes.

It is ſaid that the prieſts lodged in wooden ſheds, ſupported by the wall.

It is difficult to comprehend the dimenſions of this architecture. We are told in the ſame book of Kings, that upon the walls of this temple there were three wooden floors: that the firſt was five cubits wide, the ſecond ſix, and the third ſeven. Theſe proportions are not the ſame as ours: Theſe floors would have aſtoniſhed Michael Angelo and Bradamante. Be this as it may, it ſhould be conſidered, that this temple was built upon the declivity of the mountain of Moria, and conſequently that it could not be of any great depth. A perſon muſt have went up ſeveral ſteps before he could gain the little eſplanade, where ſtood the long ſanctuary of

twenty cubits. Now a temple wherein a perſon muſt go up and down is a barbarous edifice. It was to be admired for its ſanctity; but not for its architecture. It was not neceſſary to accompliſh God's deſigns, that the city of Jeruſalem was to be the moſt magnificent of all cities, and his people the moſt powerful of all people; nor was it neceſſary that its temple ſhould ſurpaſs that of all other nations: the fineſt temple is that wherein the pureſt devotions are paid to him.

The greateſt part of commentators have taken the trouble to delineate this edifice, each in his own way. There is reaſon to believe, that not one of theſe draftsmen ever built a houſe. We conceive however, that theſe walls which ſupported theſe three floors being ſtone, people might make a defence in this little retreat, for two or three days.

This little fortreſs of a people deprived of arts did not hold out againſt Nebuzardam, one of the captains of the king of Babylon, whom we call Nebuchodonoſor or Nebuchædnoſor.

The ſecond temple erected by Nehemiah was neither ſo great nor ſumptuous. We learn in the book of Eſdras, that the walls of this new temple had only three rows of rough ſtone, and that the reſt was of wood only. It was rather a barn than a temple. But that which Herod afterwards built was a real fortreſs. He was obliged, as Joſephus tells us, to demoliſh the temple of Nehemiah, which he calls the temple of Aggea. Herod fitted up part

of the precipice, at the bottom of the mountain of Moria, to make a platform, which was ſupported by a very thick wall, whereupon the temple was erected. Near this edifice ſtood the tower of Antonia, which he again fortified; ſo that this temple was a real citadel.

In effect, the Jews had reſolution enough to defend themſelves againſt Titus's army, till a Roman ſoldier having thrown in a flaming piece of timber, the whole edifice immediately took fire. This proves that the internal buildings of the temple conſiſted of nothing but wood in the time of Herod, as well as in the reigns of Nehemiah and Solomon.

Theſe fir buildings are ſomewhat contradictory to that magnificence which Joſephus, ſo fond of exaggerating, ſpeaks of. He ſays, that Titus having entered into the ſanctuary admired it, and owned that its riches ſurpaſſed its fame. It is not very probable that a Roman emperor, in the midſt of carnage, marching over heaps of ſlain, ſhould amuſe himſelf, in conſidering with admiration an edifice twenty cubits long, as was the ſanctuary; and that a man who had ſeen the Capitol ſhould be ſurpriſed at the magnificence of a Jewiſh temple. This temple was doubtleſs very holy; but a ſanctuary twenty cubits long was not built by a Vitruvius The fine temples were thoſe of Epheſus, Alexandria, Athens, Olympus, and Rome.

Joſephus, in his declamation againſt Appion, ſays, "that the Jews wanted only one temple, be-

"cauſe there is but one God." This reaſoning does not appear concluſive; for if the country of the Jews, like that of many other people, had been ſeven or eight hundred miles in circumference, they muſt have paſſed their whole lives in travelling, to ſacrifice in this temple once a year. It follows from there being only one God, that all the temples of the world ſhould be dedicated to him only; but it does not follow, that there ſhould be only one temple upon earth. Superſtition is always ſupported by falſe logic.

Beſides, how could Joſephus ſay that the Jews wanted only one temple, when they had from the reign of Ptolomy Philometor a temple well enough known, of the *Onion*, at Bubaſtis in Ægypt?

CHAP. XXXV.

Of Magic.

WHAT is magic? The ſecret of doing what nature cannot perform; what is impoſſible: yet magic has at all times gained credit. The word is derived from the *Mag*, *Magdim*, or magi of Chaldea. They knew more than other people; they ſought for the cauſe of rain and fine weather; and they were ſoon reckoned to be the makers of rain and fine weather. They were aſtronomers; the moſt ignorant and daring were aſtrologers;

An event happened under a junction of two planets, theſe two planets had therefor produced this event; and the aſtrologers were the maſters of the planets. Diſtempered imaginations had in a dream ſeen their friends dying or dead: the magicians made the departed friends appear.

Having diſcovered the courſe of the moon, they could eaſily make the moon take a trip down upon earth. They alſo diſpoſed of the life of man either by figures of wax, or by pronouncing the name of God or the devil. Clement of Alexandria in his Stromates, book v. ſays, that according to an ancient author, Moſes pronounced the name Ihaho, or Jehovah, ſo effectually to the ear of Phara Nekefr, king of Ægypt, that he died upon the ſpot.

In fine, from the time of Jannes and Membres, who were the patent ſorcerers of Pharoah, till that of La Marechale D'Ancre, who was burnt at Paris, for killing a white cock when it was full moon, there was not any period deſtitute of ſorcery.

The Pythoneſs of Endor who raiſed the Ghoſt of Samuel is very well known: it is true there is ſomething ſtrange that the word *Python*, which is Greek, ſhould be known to the Jews, in the time of Saul. Many learned men have concluded from hence that this hiſtory was not written, till the Jews traded with the Greeks, after the time of Alexander; but this is not the point in queſtion here.

To return to magic: the Jews carried on the trade as ſoon as they were diſperſed over the world.

The ſorcerer's ſabbath is an evident proof of this: and the he-goat, with which the ſorcereſſes were ſuppoſed to have copulated, is derived from the antient correſpondence the Jews had with goats in the Deſert, with which they are reproached in Leviticus, chap. xviii.

There are ſcarce any criminal proſecutions carried on amongſt us for ſorcery, without ſome Jews being impeached.

The Romans, as enlightened as they were in the time of Auguſtus, were ſtill infatuated with ſorcery, as we are. See Virgil's Eclogue, intitled *Pharmacentria*.

Carmina vel cœlo poſſunt deducere lunam:

The voice of the enchanter brings down the moon.

His ego ſæpe lupum fieri et ſe condere ſilvis:
Mœrim ſæpe animas imis exire ſepulchris.

Smear'd with theſe pow'rful juices, on the plain
He howls a wolf among the hungry train:
And oft the mighty necromancer boaſts,
With theſe, to call from tombs the ſtalking ghoſts.

People are aſtoniſhed that Virgil to this day paſſes for a ſorcerer at Naples. There is no occaſion to ſeek for the reaſon any where but in this Eclogue.

Horace reproaches Sagana and Canidia with their abominable ſorcery. The firſt heads of the republic were infected with theſe ſhocking notions. Sex-

tus, ſon to Pompey the Great, immolated a child in one of theſe enchantments.

Philters were charms of a leſs violent nature, that they might gain more admirers: the Jews were the proprietors of them, and ſold them to the Roman ladies. Such of that nation, as could not become rich brokers, fabricated prophecies or philters.

All theſe extravagancies, ridiculous impoſitions, or ſhocking impoſtures, are perpetuated amongſt ourſelves; and no age has diſcredited them. Miſſionaries have been aſtoniſhed to find theſe extravagancies at the extremities of the world, and they have complained to the people whom the demon had inſpired with them. Why, my friends, did you not remain in your own country? You would not, indeed, have met with more devils there; but you would have found every whit as much nonſenſe.

You would have ſeen thouſands of wretches inſenſible enough to believe themſelves ſorcerers, and judges ſtupid and barbarous enough to condemn them to the flames; you would have ſeen a juriſprudence in Europe founded on magic, in the ſame manner as there are laws againſt theft and murder; a juriſprudence eſtabliſhed upon the deciſion of councils. What was ſtill worſe, was, that the people finding the magiſtracy of the church believed in magic, they were only the more invincibly perſuaded of its exiſtence; and conſequently the more ſorcerers were perſecuted, the more numerous

they became. Whence aroſe ſo fatal and general an error? From ignorance; and this evinces that thoſe who undeceive men are the greateſt benefactors.

It has been ſaid, that the univerſal conſent of all men was the teſt of trnth. What a proof! Every people has believed in magic, in aſtrology, in oracles, in lunar influences. It ſhould at leaſt have been ſaid, that the conſent of all wiſe men was not a proof, but a kind of probability! did not all the ſages before Copernicus believe, that the earth was motionleſs, and fixed in the center of the world?

No one people have a right to ridicule another; if Rabelais calls Picatrix, "my reverend father in "the devil," becauſe magic was taught at Toledo, Salamanca, and Seville, the Spainards may retort upon the French the prodigious number of their ſorcerers.

France is, perhaps, of all countries that which has the moſt blended cruelty and ridicule. There is not a ſingle tribunal in France, that has not burnt many magicians. In ancient Rome there were madmen who fancied themſelves ſorcerers; but we do not find any barbarians that burnt them.

CHAP. XXXVI.

Of human VICTIMS.

MEN would have been too happy if they had only been deluded; but time, whereby cuſtoms are alternately corrupted and rectified, having ſhed the blood of animals upon the altar, the butchering prieſts, habitually ſanguinary, changed from animals to man; and ſuperſtition the natural daughter of religion, ſo far forſook her mother's purity, as to compel men to ſacrifice their own children, under the pretence that we ſhould give to God what was the deareſt to us.

The firſt ſacrifice of this nature, if the fragments of Sanchoniato are to be credited, was that of Jehud amongſt the Phenicians, who was immolated by his father Hillu, about two thouſand years before our æra. The great ſtates were at this time already eſtabliſhed; Syria, Chaldea, and Ægypt, were very flouriſhing, and Herodotus ſays, that a young woman was ſo early drowned in the Nile, to obtain a more abundant flux of this river, which was neither too rapid nor too feeble.

Theſe abominable ſacrifices made their way almoſt over the whole earth. Pauſanias aſſerts, that Lycaon immolated the firſt of his human victims in Greece. This cuſtom muſt have been re-

ceived in the time of the Trojan war, as Homer makes Achilles immolate twelve Trojans to Patrocles's ſhade. Would Homer have dared aſſert ſo terrible a thing? Would he not have feared diſguſting all his readers, if ſacrifices had not been in uſe?

I do not ſpeak of the ſacrifice of Iphigenia, or that of Idomante, ſon of Idomeneus: whether true or falſe they prove the reigning opinion. The ſacrifices which the Taurian Scythians made of ſtrangers cannot be doubted.

If we deſcend to more modern times, the Tyrians and Carthaginians, when in eminent danger, ſacrificed a man to Saturn. The ſame was done in Italy; and the Romans themſelves, who condemned theſe horrid proceedings, immolated two Gauls and two Greeks, to expiate a veſtal's crime. This is what Plutarch teaches us, in his Queſtions upon the Romans.

This horrid cuſtom prevailed among the Gauls and Germans. The Druids burnt human victims in large ozier figures. Amongſt the Germans, ſorcerers cut the throats of thoſe who were devoted to death, and judged of futurity by the greater or leſs rapidity of blood which iſſued from the wound.

I believe theſe ſacrifices did not often happen. If they had been made annual feſtivals, if every family had been in perpetual apprehenſion of their handſomeſt girl or oldeſt boy being choſen, to have their hearts ſacredly torn out upon a conſecrated

ſtone, this would ſoon have been put an end to, by immolating the prieſts themſelves. It is very probable, that theſe holy parricides were not committed but upon very urgent occaſions, in times of imminent danger, when men are conquered by fear, and when the falſe idea of public intereſt ſilenced all private conſiderations.

Amongſt the Bramins, every widow did not burn herſelf upon her huſband's corpſe. The moſt devote and raſh have from time immemorial made, and ſtill make, this aſtoniſhing ſacrifice. The Scythians ſometimes immolated to the manes of their Kans the moſt favourite officers of theſe princes. Herodotus ſays they were impaled round the royal corpſe; but it does not appear by hiſtory this cuſtom prevailed for any length of time.

If we read the hiſtory of the Jews written by an author of another nation, we ſhall with difficulty believe, that there ever really was a fugitive people of Ægypt, who came by the expreſs order of God to immolate ſeven or eight ſmall nations whom they did not know; to ſlay without mercy all the women, all the old men, and even the children at the breaſt, reſerving none but the little girls; that this holy people were puniſhed by their God, when they were ſo criminal as to ſave a ſingle man, who was anathematized. We could not believe that ſo abominable a race could exiſt upon earth. But as this very people relate all theſe facts, themſelves, in their holy books, they muſt be believed.

I ſhall not here diſcuſs the queſtion, whether theſe books were inſpired. Our holy church, which looks with horror upon the Jews, teaches us that theſe Jewiſh books were dictated by God, the creator and father of all men; I cannot form the leaſt doubt about it, nor allow myſelf in any ſhape to reaſon upon it.

It is true that our feeble underſtanding cannot conceive in God any other wiſdom, any other juſtice, any other goodneſs, than thoſe of which we have the idea: but, in fine, he has done all he pleaſed; it is not for us to judge him: I conſtantly confine myſelf to mere hiſtory.

The Jews have a law, whereby they are expreſly ordered to ſpare nothing, nor any man devoted to the Lord: "He cannot be bought off, he muſt die," according to the law of Leviticus, chap. xxvii. It is by virtue of this law that we find Jephtha ſacrifices his own daughter, and the prieſt Samuel cuts into morſels king Agag. The Pentateuch tells us, that in the little country of Midian, which contains about nine ſquare leagues, the Iſraelites, having found ſix hundred ſeventy-five thouſand ſheep, ſeventy two thouſand oxen, ſixty-one thouſand aſſes, and thirty-two thouſand virgins, Moſes commanded that all the men, all the women, and all the children, ſhould be maſſacred; and that all the maids ſhould be preſerved, and thirty-two only of them were immolated. The remarkable part of this acknowlegement is, that this ſame Moſes was a kinſ-

man of Jethro, the high-prieſt of the Midianites, who had done him the moſt ſignal ſervices, and heaped kindneſſes upon him

The ſame book tells us, that Joſhua, the ſon of Nun, having paſſed the river Jordan, with his herd dry-footed, having cauſed the walls of Jericho, which was anathematized, to fall at the ſound of trumpets, that he made all the inhabitants periſh in the flames; that he preſerved only Rachab, the harlot, and her family, who had concealed the ſpies of the holy people; that the ſame Joſhua devoted to death twelve thouſand inhabitants of the city of Hai; and that he ſacrificed to the Lord thirty-one kings of the country, who were all anathematized and hanged. We have nothing in our latter times to compare with theſe religious aſſaſſinations, without it be the maſſacre of St. Bartholomew, and thoſe of Ireland.

It is melancholy that many people doubt the Jews having found ſix hundred ſeventy-five thouſand ſheep, and thirty-two thouſand virgins, in the village of a deſert in the midſt of rocks, and that no one doubts of the affair of St. Bartholomew. But we cannot too often repeat, how much the lights of our reaſon are impotent, when we endeavour to elucidate the ſtrange events of antiquity, and clear unto our underſtandings the reaſons why God, maſter of life and death, choſe the Jewiſh people to exterminate the people of Canaan.

CHAP. XXXVII.

Of the Mysteries of Ceres Eleusina.

IN the chaos of popular ſuperſtition, which would have made almoſt the whole globe one vaſt den of ferocious animals, there was a ſalutary inſtitution which prevented one part of the human ſpecies from degenerating into an intire ſtate of brutality: this conſiſted of myſteries and expiations. It was ſcarce poſſible not to find ſome people of gentle diſpoſition, and ſages, amongſt ſo many cruel madmen; or that there ſhould be no philoſophers, who ſhould endeavour to bring men back to reaſon and morality.

Thoſe ſages made uſe of ſuperſtition itſelf to correct its enormous abuſes, in the ſame manner as the heart of a viper is applied to cure its bite; many fables were intermingled with uſeful truths, and theſe truths were ſupported by fable.

The myſteries of Zoroaſter are no longer known: we have but very little inſight into thoſe of Iſis; but we cannot doubt, that they foretold the grand ſyſtem of a future ſtate; for Celſus ſays to Origen, book viii. "You boaſt of believing in eternal puniſhments, and did not all the myſtical miniſters "preach them to their initiated?"

God's unity was the principal dogma of all the

myſteries. Apuleius has preſerved for us the prayer of the prieſteſſes of Iſis: "The cœleſtial powers "ſerve thee; the infernal regions are ſubmitted to "thee; the univerſe revolves in thine hand; thy "feet trample upon Tartarus; the planets anſwer "to thy voice; the ſeaſons return at thy order; "the elements obey thee."

The myſtical ceremoniesof Ceres were an imitation of thoſe of Iſis. Thoſe who had committed crimes confeſſed them and expiated them; they faſted, purified themſelves, and gave alms. All the ceremonies were held ſacred by ſolemn oaths, to make them more venerated. The myſteries were celebrated at night, in order to inſpire a kind of holy horror. Certain ſpecies of tragedies were repreſented, the fable of which ſet forth the happineſs of the juſt, and the puniſhments of the wicked. The greateſt men of antiquity, ſuch as Plato and Cicero, have written elogiums upon theſe myſteries, which were not yet degenerated from their primitive purity.

Some very learned men have proved, that the ſixth book of the Æneid is only a picture of what was practiſed in theſe ſacred and famous repreſentations. He does not, indeed, ſpeak of the Demiourgos, who repreſented the creator; but in the veſtibule, or prelude, he brings on the children whoſe parents had left them to periſh; and this was a hint to fathers and mothers. *Continuo auditæ voces vagitus et ingens, etc.* Minos afterwards appeared to judge

the dead The wicked were dragged to Tartarus, and the juſt conducted to the Elyſian fields This garden comprized every thing the imagination could ſuggeſt for the benefit of mere men. Only heroes and demi-gods obtained the privilege of aſcending to heaven. Every religion has ſuggeſted a garden for the abode of the juſt; and even when the Eſſenians, amongſt the Jewiſh people, received the dogma of a future ſtate, they believed that the good, after death, would go into a garden upon the banks of the ſea. As for the Phariſees, they adopted the metempſichoſis, and not the reſurrection. If it be allowed to quote the ſacred hiſtory of Jeſus Chriſt, amongſt ſuch a variety of prophane things, we ſhall obſerve, that he ſays to the penitent thief, "this "day ſhalt thou be with me in the garden *." He conformed himſelf to the language of all men.

The myſteries of Eleuſina became the moſt celebrated. One very remarkable thing is, that they there read the beginning of the theogony of Sanchoniato the Phenician; this is a proof that Sanchoniato had preached one ſupreme God, creator, and governor of the world It was then that this doctrine was unveiled to the initiated, inſtructed in the belief of polytheiſm. Let us image to ourſelves a ſuperſtitious people, who were accuſtomed from their earlieſt infancy to pay the ſame worſhip to the virgin, St. Joſeph, and the other ſaints, as to God

* St. Luke, chap. xxiii.

the father. It would perhaps be dangerous to diſabuſe them all on a ſudden; it would at firſt be prudent to reveal only to the moſt moderate and rational the infinite diſtance there is between God and his creatures. This was preciſely the ſyſtem of the myſtagogues. Thoſe who participated of the myſteries aſſembled in the temple of Ceres, and the Hierophanta taught them, that inſtead of adoring Ceres and Triptolemus upon a car drawn by dragons, they ſhould adore that God who nouriſhed men, and permitted Ceres and Triptolemus to render agriculture ſo honourable.

This is ſo true, that the Hierophanta began by reciting the ancient verſes of Orpheus: "Walk in "the path of juſtice; adore the ſole maſter of the "univerſe; he is one, he is ſingly by himſelf; to "him all beings owe their exiſtence; he acts in them "and by them; he ſees all, and never was ſeen by "mortal eyes."

I acknowlege I do not conceive how Pauſanias can ſay that theſe verſes are not as eſtimable as thoſe of Homer: it muſt be agreed, at leaſt, that with reſpect to ſenſe they are of more intrinſic value than the Iliad and Odyſſey together.

The learned biſhop Warburton, though very unjuſt in many of his bold deciſions, gives great ſtrength to all that I have been ſaying of the neceſſity of concealing the dogma of God's unity to a people headſtrong with polytheiſm. He obſerves after Plutarch, that the young Alcibiades, having

aſſiſted at theſe myſteries, readily inſulted the ſtatues of Mercury in a party of debauchery with ſeveral of his friends; and that the people in their rage inſiſted upon Alcibiades's being condemned.

The greateſt diſcretion was therefor then neceſſary, not to ſhock the prejudices of the multitude: Alexander himſelf, having obtained leave in Ægypt of the Hierophanta of the myſteries, to acquaint his mother with the ſecrets of the initiated, at the ſame time conjured her to burn his letter after reading it, that ſhe might not irritate the Greeks.

Thoſe who, deceived by falſe zeal, have ſince imagined that the myſteries were nothing but infamous debauches ought to be undeceived by the word which anſwers to *initiated;* it ſignifies, that they entered upon a new life.

Another indubitable proof that theſe myſteries were celebrated only to inſpire virtue in men is the ſet form with which the aſſembly was diſmiſſed. Amongſt the Greeks, the two ancient Phenician words *Koff omphet*, Watch and be pure, were pronounced. We may produce, as an additional proof, that the emperor Nero, who was guilty of his mother's death, could not be admitted to theſe myſteries, when he travelled in Greece; the crime was too enormous; and as great an emperor as he was, the initiated would not receive him among them. Zozimus alſo ſays, that Conſtantine could find no Pagan prieſts who would purify him and abſolve him of parricide.

There muſt then, in fact, have been amongſt thoſe people whom we call Pagans, Gentiles, and idolaters, a very pure religion, whilſt the people and prieſts followed ſhameful cuſtoms, trifling ceremonies, ridiculous doctrines, and while they even ſometimes ſhed human blood in honour of ſome imaginary gods, who were deſpiſed aud deteſted by the ſages.

This pure religion conſiſted in acknowleging the exiſtence of a ſupreme God, his providence and juſtice. What diſfigured theſe myſteries, if Tertullian is to be credited, was the ceremony of regeneration. It was neceſſary that the initiated ſhould ſeem to be re-born; this was the ſymbol of the new kind of life he was to embrace. He was preſented with a crown, and he trampled upon it. The Hierophanta held the ſacred kniſe over his head; the initiated, who feigned to be ſtruck with it, fell as if he were dead; after which he appeared to regenerate. The free-maſons ſtill retain a fragment of this ancient ceremony.

Pauſanias in his Arcadics tells us, that in ſeveral temples of Eleuſina the penitents and initiated were flagellated; an odious cuſtom, which was a long time after introduced in ſeveral chriſtian churches. I doubt not that in all theſe myſteries, the groundwork of which was ſo ſenſible and uſeful, many cenſurable ſuperſtitions were introduced. Superſtition led to debauchery, which brought on contempt. Of all theſe ancient myſteries, there were

at length no other remains, but thoſe gangs of beggars, whom we have ſeen, under the name of Ægyptians and Bohemians, wander all over Europe with caſtinets, dancing the prieſts of Iſis' dance, ſelling balm, curing the itch, though covered with it, telling fortunes, and ſtealing poultry. Such has been the end of what was the moſt ſacred thing of half the known world.

CHAP. XXXVIII.

Of the Jews, at the time they began to be known.

WE ſhall touch as little as poſſible upon what is divine in the hiſtory of the Jews; or, if we are compelled to ſpeak of it, we ſhall go no farther than as their miracles have an eſſential connection with the ſequel of events. We have all the reſpect that is due to the continual prodigies which ſignalized all the ſteps of that nation. We believe them with all the reaſonable faith that is required by the church, that is, the ſubſtitute to the ſynagogue; we do not examine them, we conſtantly confine ourſelves to hiſtory. We ſhall talk of the Jews, as we ſpoke of the Scythians and the Greeks, in weighing the probabilities, and diſcuſſing the facts. No other perſons than themſelves having wrote their hiſtory, before the Romans deſtroyed their ſtate, it is only neceſſary to conſult their annals.

This is one of the moſt modern nations, conſidering them as the other people only from the time they formed a ſettlement and poſſeſſed a capital. The Jews ſeem to be conſidered by their neighbours only in the time of Solomon, which was nearly about Heſiod and Homer, and the firſt archons of Athens.

The name of Solomon, or Soleiman, is well known to the Eaſtern people; but that of David is not, and Saul ſtill leſs. The Jews before Saul appeared only like a band of Arabs of the Deſert, of ſo little power that the Phenicians treated them nearly in the ſame manner as the Lacedemonians treated the Ilotes. Theſe were ſlaves, who were not allowed arms. They had not the privilege of forging iron, nor even to ſharpen their plow-ſhares and the edge of their hatchets. They were obliged to apply to their maſters for any kind of work of this nature; this is ſet forth by the Jews in the book of Samuel; and they add, that they had neither ſword nor javelin, in the battle which Saul and Jonathan gave at Bethaven againſt the Phenicians, or Philiſtines, an action in which it is related of Saul, that he made an oath of ſacrificing to the Lord him that ſhould eat during the conflict.

It is true that before this battle, won without arms, it is ſaid in the preceding chapter*, that Saul with an army of three hundred thirty thouſand men

* 1 Kings, chap. ii.

entirely defeated the Ammonites; which does not ſeem to agree with the confeſſion, that they had neither ſword nor javelin, nor any other arms. Moreover, the greateſt princes have ſeldom had at one time three hundred thirty thouſand effective warriors. How could the Jews, who appear wandering and oppreſſed in this little country, which has not a ſingle fortified city, no arms, not ſo much as a ſword, be able to bring three hundred thirty thouſand ſoldiers into the field? Theſe were ſufficient to conquer Aſia and Europe. Let us leave the pains of reconciling theſe apparent contradictions, which ſuperior intellects remove, to learned and celebrated authors: let us reſpect what we are obliged to reſpect; and let us recur to the hiſtory of the Jews according to their own writings.

CHAP XXXIX.

Of the Jews in Ægypt.

ACCORDING to the annals of the Jews, this nation inhabited the confines of Ægypt in thoſe remote times that hiſtory furniſhes no account of: they reſided in the little country of Goſſen, or Geſſen towards mount Caſius and like Sirbon. The Arabians, who, in winter, repair with their herds to graze in Lower Ægypt, ſtill remain there. This nation was compoſed of no more han a ſingle fa-

mily, who, in the ſpace of two hundred years, produced a race of two millions of people; for to furniſh ſix hundred thouſand warriors, who according to Geneſis came out of Ægypt, they muſt have conſiſted of at leaſt two millions of ſouls. This multiplication, contrary to the order of nature, is one of thoſe miracles which God deigned to operate in favour of the Jews.

It is in vain for a multitude of learned men to be aſtoniſhed that the king of Ægypt ſhould have commanded the two midwives to deſtroy all the male children of the Hebrews; that the king's daughter who reſided at Memphis ſhould go and bathe herſelf at a great diſtance from Memphis, in a branch of the Nile, where nobody ever bathed, on account of crocodiles: it is in vain for them to make objections to the age of eighty, which Moſes had already attained, before he undertook to conduct a whole people out of bondage.

They diſpute upon the ten plagues of Ægypt; they ſay that the magicians of the kingdom could not perform the ſame miracles as the meſſenger of God; and that if God gave them this power, he ſeems to have acted againſt himſelf. They ſuppoſe, that as Moſes had changed all the waters into blood, there remained no more water for the magicians to perform the ſame metamorphoſis upon.

They aſk how could Pharoah purſue the Jews with a great number of horſemen, after all the horſes had died, by the fifth and ſixth plagues? They aſk,

why ſix hundred thouſand warriors ſhould run away when God was at their head, and they might have engaged the Ægyptians to advantage, all the firſt-born of whom being ſtruck dead? They aſk again, why God did not give fertile Ægypt to his cheriſhed people, inſtead of making them wander forty years in ſhocking deſerts?

There is but a ſingle anſwer to all theſe innumerable objections; and this anſwer is, God would have it ſo; the church believes it, and we ſhould believe it. It is in this reſpect, that this hiſtory differs from others. Every people have their prodigies; but every thing is prodigious with the Jewiſh nation; and it ſhould have been ſo, as they were conducted by God himſelf. It is plain that the hiſtory of God ſhould not reſemble that of men. Wherefor we ſhall not relate any of thoſe ſupernatural facts, which ſhould be mentioned only in the holy Scripture. Still leſs ſhould we dare attempt their explanation. Let us only examine thoſe few that may be ſubject to criticiſm.

CHAP. XL.

Of Moses, conſidered only as the Chief of a Nation.

THE maſter of nature only gives ſtrength to the arm which he deigns to chuſe. Moſes is ſupernatural in every thing. More than one

learned man has looked upon him as a very able politician. Others have conſidered him only as a week reed, which the divine hand deigned to uſe, to frame the deſtiny of empires. What can we think of an old man of eighty years of age, who by himſelf alone undertakes to conduct a whole people over whom he had no authority? His arm cannot fight, nor his tongue articulate. He is deſcribed a cripple and a ſtammerer. He conducts his followers for forty years ſucceſſively into horrid deſerts. He wants to give them a ſettlement; but he gives them none. If we were to purſue his ſteps, in the deſert of Sur, Sin, Oreb, Sinai, Phara, Cadeſh Barnea, and obſerve his retrograde motions towards the very ſpot he ſat out from, we could not eaſily conceive that he was a great captain. He is at the head of ſix hundred thouſand warriors, and he could neither provide cloathing nor ſubſiſtence for his troops. God does all things, God remedies all things, he nouriſhes, he cloaths the people by miracles. Moſes, then, is nothing of himſelf, and his impotence ſhews, that he can be guided by nothing but the hand of the Almighty: we therefor conſider him only as a man, and not the miniſter of God. His perſon, in this capacity, is an object of more ſublime enquiry.

He wants to go into the country of the Canaanites, on the weſt of Jordan, in the country of Jericho, which is in fact the only fruitful ſpot of the whole province; and inſtead of taking this road, he turns

towards the eaſt, between Eſiongaber, and the Black Sea, a ſavage barren country, thick ſtrewed with mountains that do not produce a ſingle ſhrub, without a rivulet, without a fountain, ſave a few little wells of ſalt water. When the news of this irruption of a foreign people reached the Canaanites or Phenicians, they came and gave them battle in theſe deſerts, near Cadeſh Barnea. How can he let himſelf be beat at the head of ſix hundred thouſand ſoldiers, in a country which does not now contain three thouſand inhabitants? At the end of thirty-nine years, he gains two victories, but he does not compaſs any one object of his legiſlation: he and his people die before he ſets foot in the country which he wanted to conquer.

A legiſlator, according to our common notions, ſhould make himſelf beloved and feared; but he ſhould not puſh ſeverity to barbarity: he ſhould not, inſtead of inflicting by the miniſters of the law ſome puniſhments upon the criminal, make a foreign nation murder the greateſt part of his own people.

Could Moſes at near the age of an hundred and twenty years, being conducted only by himſelf, have been ſo inhuman, ſo hardened in bloodſhed, as to command the Levites to maſſacre indiſcriminately their brothers to the number of twenty-three thouſand, to ſcreen his own brother, who ought rather to have died, than made a golden calf to be adored? And, ſtrange to relate, his brother is after this

ſhameful action created high pontiff, and thirty-three thouſand men are maſſacred.

Moſes had wedded a Midianite, daughter to Jethro, high prieſt of Midian, in Arabia Petræa: Jethro had heaped kindneſſes upon him: he had beſtowed his ſon upon him, to ſerve him as a guide in the deſerts: what cruelty, contrary to all policy (to judge according to our feeble notions) muſt Moſes have been guilty of, to ſacrifice twenty-four thouſand men of his own nation, under pretence that a Jew had been found lying with a Midianite? And how can it be ſaid, after ſuch aſtoniſhing butchery, "that Moſes was the moſt gentle of all men?" We muſt acknowlege, humanly ſpeaking, that theſe horrid deeds revolt againſt reaſon and nature. But, if we conſider Moſes as the miniſter of God's deſigns and vengeance, the aſpect is entirely changed: he is the inſtrument of the divinity, whom we ſhould not call to account. We ſhould offer up ſilent adoration.

If Moſes had of himſelf inſtituted his religion, like Zoroaſter, Thaut, the firſt Bramins, Numa, Mahomet, and many others, we might aſk him why he did not avail himſelf of the moſt uſeful and efficacious means of reſtraining luſt and ſin? why he did not expreſly preach the immortality of the ſoul, rewards and puniſhments after death; dogmas long before received in Ægypt, in Phenicia, in Meſopotamia, in Perſia, and in India? "You have been "inſtructed, we ſhould tell him, in the wiſdom of

"the Ægyptians, you are a legiſlator, and you ab-
"ſolutely neglect the principal dogma of the Æ-
"gyptians, the moſt neceſſary dogma to man, a
"belief ſo ſalutary and holy, that your own Jews,
"barbarous as they were, embraced it a long time,
"after you; it was, at leaſt, partly adopted by the
"Eſſenes, and the Phariſees, at the end of a thou-
"ſand years."

This perplexing objection againſt a common legiſlator falls to the ground, and loſes, as we find, all its force, when a law given by God himſelf, who condeſcended being the king of the Jewiſh people, temporally rewarded and puniſhed them, and who would not reveal the knowlege of the immortality of the ſoul, and hell's eternal torments, but at the time appointed by his decrees. Almoſt every event merely human among the Jews is the ſummit of horror. Every thing divine is above our feeble comprehenſions. We are conſtantly ſilenced by them both.

There have been men of extenſive knowlege, who have carried their ſcepticiſm ſo far as to doubt there having ever exiſted ſuch a man as Moſes: his life, which is a ſeries of prodigies from his cradle to his grave, appeared to them an imitation of the ancient Arabian fables, and particularly that of the ancient Bacchus* They do not know at what period to fix Moſes; even the name of Pharoah, king of E-

* See the article under the head of Bacchus.

gypt, is unknown. No monument, no veſtige, remains of the country in which he is ſaid to travel. It ſeems impoſſible to them, that Moſes ſhould have governed two or three millions of men for forty years in uninhabitable deſerts, where we can ſcarce meet at preſent with two or three gangs of vagabonds, who do not altogether make more than between three and four thouſand men. We are far from adopting this bold opinion, which would ſap the very foundation of the ancient hiſtory of the Jewiſh people.

Neither ſhall we adhere to the opinion of Aben Eſra, of Maimonides, Nugens, or the author of the Jewiſh Ceremonies, though the learned Le Clerc, Middleton, the learned men known by the title of theologians of Holland, and even the great Newton, have added weight to the doctrine. Theſe illuſtrious ſcholars imagine that neither Moſes nor Joſhua could write thoſe books that are attributed to them: they ſay that their hiſtories and laws would have been engraven upon wood, if in fact they had exiſted; that this art required prodigious aſſiduity; and that it was not poſſible to cultivate this art in deſerts. They found their opinion, as may be ſeen in other places, upon anticipation and aparent contradictions. In oppoſition to theſe great men, we embrace the common opinion, which is that of the ſynagogue and the church, whoſe infallibility we acknowlege.

Not that we dare accuſe the Le Clercs, the Mid-

dletons, or the Newtons of impiety; God forbid! we are convinced that if the books of Moſes and Joſhua, and the reſt of the Pentateuch, do not appear to them to come from the hands of thoſe heroes of Iſrael, they were not leſs of opinion that theſe books were inſpired. They acknowlege the finger of God in every line of Geneſis, in Joſhua, Sampſon, and Ruth. The Jewiſh writer was, as we may ſay, nothing more than the ſecretary of God; that God who has dictated all things. Newton, doubtleſs, could not think otherwiſe; this we ſufficiently know. God keep us from reſembling thoſe perverſe hypocrites, who avail themſelves of every pretence to accuſe all great men of irreligion, juſt as they were formerly accuſed of magic! We ſhould think that we did not only walk diſhoneſtly, but cruelly inſult the chriſtian religion, if we were ſo abandoned as to want to perſuade the public, that the moſt learned men and the greateſt geniuſſes upon earth are not true Chriſtians. The more we reſpect the church which we ſubmit to, the more we are of opinion that this church tolerates the opinions of theſe virtuous ſcholars, with that charity that forms its character.

CHAP XLI.

Of the JEWS after MOSES, till the time of SAUL.

I Do not endeavour to diſcover why Joſhua or Joſuah, captain of the Jews, in making his tribe paſs from the eaſt of Jordan to the weſt, towards Jericho, ſhould want God to ſuſpend the courſe of this river, which is not at that place forty feet wide, when it was ſo eaſy to throw a wooden bridge over, and when it was ſtill more eaſy to ford it. There were ſeveral fords to this river, which is proved by the Iſraelites ſlaying at one of them the forty-two thouſand Iſraelites, who could not pronounce the word *Shiboleth*.

I do not aſk why Jericho ſhould fall at the ſound of trumpets; theſe are freſh prodigies, which God thought fit to operate in favour of the people whoſe king he had declared himſelf; this does not compoſe the ſpring of hiſtory. I ſhall not examine what right Joſhua had to come and deſtroy villages, where his name had never been heard. The Jews ſaid they deſcended from Abraham; Abraham travelled among you about four hundred years ago, therefore your country belongs to us; and we ought to cut the throats of your mothers, wives and children.

Fabricius and Holſtenius have made the following objection. What ſhould we ſay, if a Norwegian

came into Germany with ſome hundreds of his countrymen, and told the Germans that about two hundred years ago, a countryman of ours, who was the ſon of a potter, travelled near Vienna; therefor Auſtria belongs to us, and we are come to ſacrifice you all in the name of the Lord? The ſame authors conſider that the time of Joſhua is not ours: that it is not for us to caſt a prophane eye upon divine things; and particularly that God had a right to puniſh the ſins of the Canaanites by the hands of the Jews.

We are told that no ſooner was Jericho defenceleſs, than the Jews ſacrificed to their God all the inhabitants, old men, wives, daughters, children ſucking at the breaſt, and all the animals, except a female proſtitute, who had concealed the Jewiſh ſpies in her houſe; ſpies that were beſides uſeleſs, as the walls were to fall at the ſound of the trumpets. Why were all animals likewiſe killed, that might have been uſeful?

With reſpect to this woman, who in the Vulgate is called *Meretrix*, probably ſhe afterwards led a more virtuous life, as ſhe was David's grandmother. All theſe events are ſo many figures, or prophecies, which foretel from far the law of grace. Once more theſe are myſteries which we will not touch upon.

The book of Joſhua relates that this chief, having made himſelf maſter of part of the country of Canaan, he hanged up thirty-one of its kings, that

is to ſay, thirty kings and one of the principal burgeſſes, who had dared defend their fire-ſides, their wives and children. We ſhould here proſtrate ourſelves to providence, who chaſtiſed the ſins of theſe kings by the ſword of Joſhua.

It is not at all aſtoniſhing that the neighbouring people ſhould unite againſt the Jews, who could appear as nothing but an execrable banditti, to a people, who were not enlightened, and not as the ſacred inſtruments of divine vengeance, and the future ſalvation of the human race. They were reduced to ſlavery by Cuſhan-riſhathaim, king of Meſopotamia. It is true that Meſopotamia and Jericho are at a great diſtance; Cuſhan-riſhathaim muſt then have conquered Syria, and part of Paleſtine. Be this as it may, they were in bondage eight years, and remained afterwards ſixty-two years upon the ſame ſpot. Theſe ſixty-two years were a ſpace of ſervitude, as they were commanded by the law to take all the country from the Mediterranean to the Euphrates, all this vaſt extent of country being promiſed * to them; and they would doubtleſs have been tempted to ſeize upon it, if they had been at liberty. They were eighteen years in bondage under Eglon king of the Moabites, who was aſſaſſinated by Aod; they were afterwards for twenty-eight years ſlaves to a people of Canaan, whom they do

* Geneſis, chap. 15. v. 18. Deuter. chap. 1. v. 7.

not name, till the warlike propheteſs Deborah delivered them. Gideon held them afterwards for ſeven years in bondage.

They were for eighteen years ſlaves to the Phenicians, whom they call Philiſtines, till the time of Jephtha. They were then for forty years more ſlaves to the Phenicians, till the time of Saul. What may perplex our judgment is, that they were ſlaves even in the time of Sampſon, when Sampſon required only the jaw-bone of an aſs to kill a thouſand Philiſtines, and when God operated by the hands of Sampſon the moſt aſtoniſhing prodigies.

Let us ſtop a moment to obſerve, how many Jews were exterminated by their own brothers, or by the order of God himſelf, from the time that they wandered in the deſert, till the time that they had a king elected by drawing lots.

The Levites, after the adoration of the golden calf, caſt in a mould by Moſe's brother, maſſacred	23,000 Jews.
Deſtroyed by fire, at Korah's revolt - - - - -	250
Put to death for the ſame revolt	14,700
Put to death for having correſpondence with Midianite girls	24,000
	61,950

Brought over	61,950 Jews.
Slain at the ford of Jordan, for not being able to pronounce the word Shiboleth - - -	42,000
Killed by the tribe of Benjamin, who were attacked	40,000
Of the tribe of Benjamin, killed by the other tribes	45,000
When the ark was taken by the Philiſtines, and God to puniſh them, having afflicted them with the hemorrhoids, they brought back the ark to Bethſames, they offered the Lord five golden anus's, and five golden rats. The number of Bethſamites that were ſtruck dead for looking at the ark was	50,070
Total number	239,020

Here are two hundred thirty-nine thouſand and twenty Jews exterminated by the hand of God himſelf, or by their civil wars, without reckoning thoſe that periſhed in the Deſert, or who died in the battles againſt the Canaanites, etc.

If we were to judge of the Jews as of other nations, we could not conceive how the children of Jacob could have produced a race ſufficiently numerous to ſuſtain ſuch a loſs. But God who conducted them, God who tried them and puniſhed

them, rendered that nation ſo different from all the reſt of men, that we ſhould view them with other eyes than thoſe with which we look upon the reſt of the earth, and not judge of theſe events as we do of common events.

CHAP. XLII.

Of the JEWS after SAUL.

THE Jews do not appear to have enjoyed a happier lot under their kings than under their judges. Their firſt king Saul was obliged to put himſelf to death; Iſhboſheth and Mephiboſheth his ſons were aſſaſſinated.

David delivered up ſeven grandſons of Saul to the Gabonites only to be perplexed. He ordered Solomon his ſon to put to death Adonijah his other ſon, and his general Joab. King Aſa put part of the people in Jeruſalem to death. Boaſa aſſaſſinated Nadab, ſon to Jeroboam, and all his relations. Jehu aſſaſſinated Joram and Joſias, ſeventy ſons of Ahab, forty-two brothers of Acoſias, and all their friends. Athaliah aſſaſſinated all her grandchildren, except Joaſh, and ſhe is aſſaſſinated by the high-prieſt Jehoiada. Joaſh is aſſaſſinated by his ſervants. Amaziah is killed: Zacharias is aſſaſſinated by Manahem, who cauſes all the pregnant women in Tapſa to have their bellies rip-

ped up. Phaceia, ſon to Manahem, is aſſaſſinated by Phaces ſon to Romeli, who is aſſaſſinated by Oſes, ſon to Ela. Manaſſes puts a great number of Jews to death, and the Jews aſſaſſinate Ammon, ſon to Manaſſes, etc.

In the midſt of theſe maſſacres, ten tribes, who are carried off by Salmanazar, king of the Babylonians, are enſlaved and diſperſed for ever, except ſome huſbandmen, who are kept to cultivate the land.

There ſtill remains two tribes, who are ſoon enſlaved in their turn for ſeventy years: at the expiration of theſe ſeventy years, the two tribes obtain permiſſion from their conquerors and their maſters, to return to Jeruſalem. Theſe two tribes, with the few Jews that may be remaining in Samaria, with the new foreign inhabitants, are all ſubjected to the kings of Perſia.

When Alexander becomes maſter of Perſia, Judea is comprized in his conqueſts. After Alexander, the Jews remain in ſubjection at one time to the Seleucides, his ſucceſſors in Syria, and at another, to the Ptolomies, his ſucceſſors in Ægypt; conſtantly in ſubjection, and ſupporting themſelves by no other means than carrying on the trade of brokers, as they did in Aſia. They obtained ſome favours from Ptolomy Epiphanes, king of Egypt. A Jew named Joſeph became farmer-general of the impoſts in Lower Syria and Judea, which belonged to this ſame Ptolomy. This was the moſt fortunate

ſtate of the Jews; for it was at this time that they built the third part of their city, afterwards called the boſom of the Maccabees, becauſe the Maccabees completed it.

From the yoke of king Ptolomy, they paſſed under that of Antiochus, the god-king of Syria. As they had enriched themſelves in the farms, they became audacious, and revolted againſt their maſter Antiochus. The courage and great actions of the Maccabees at this period are celebrated by the Jews of Alexandria; but the Maccabees could not prevent the general Antiochus Eupator, ſon to Antiochus Epiphanes, from eraſing the walls of the temple, leaving nothing but the ſanctuary ſubſiſting, or the high-prieſt Onias, who was conſidered as the author of the revolt, from loſing his head.

Never were the Jews more attached to their law than under the kings of Syria; they no longer adored foreign divinities; it was at this time that their religion was irrevocably fixed; and they were, nevertheleſs, more unhappy than ever, always in expectation of being delivered by the promiſes of their prophets, by the aſſiſtance of their gods, but abandoned by providence, whoſe decrees are unknown to man.

They had ſometimes a breathing of tranquillity by the inteſtine wars of the kings of Syria. But the Jews ſoon armed themſelves one againſt another. As they had no kings, and as the firſt dignity was that of the ſacrificing prieſt, violent parties aroſe,

in order to obtain it; there was no method of obtaining the dignity of high-prieſt but by ſword in hand, and the path to the ſanctuary was ſtrewed with his rivals carcaſſes.

Hircan, of the race of the Maccabees, who was become high-prieſt, but ſtill in ſubjection to the Syrians, cauſed David's ſepulchre to be opened, in which the exagerator Joſephus pretends, that three thouſand talents were found. This imaginary treaſure ſhould have been ſought for, at the time of rebuilding the temple of Nehemiah. This Hircan obtained from Antiochus Sidetes the privilege of coining money: it is very probable that the treaſure found in David's tomb was not very conſiderable.

It is remarkable that this high-prieſt Hircan was a Sadducean, and that he neither believed in the immortality of the ſoul, nor in angels; a freſh ſubject of altercation, which began to divide the Sadduceans and the Phariſees. Theſe conſpired againſt Hircan, and would have condemned him to be whipped and impriſoned. He avenged himſelf of them, and governed deſpotically.

His ſon Ariſtobulus was daring enough to create himſelf king during the troubles of Syria and Egypt. This was a more cruel tyrant than any who had oppreſſed the Jewiſh people. Ariſtobulus, who indeed prayed very regularly in the temple, and never eat any pork, ſtarved his mother to death, and had his brother Antigonus ſlain. His ſucceſſor was

named John, or Johannes, who was as wicked as himſelf.

This Johannes, overwhelmed with crimes, left two ſons, who waged war againſt each other. Theſe two ſons were Ariſtobulus and Hircan. The Romans then ſubdued Aſia. Pompey, as he paſſed by, taught the Jews reaſon, took the temple, had the ſeditious hanged at the gates, and loaded the pretended king Ariſtobulus with irons.

This Ariſtobulus had a ſon, who was inſolent enough to take upon himſelf the name of Alexander. He cauſed ſome emotions, he raiſed ſome troops, and finiſhed his career by being hanged by order of Pompey.

At length, Mark Anthony gave to the Jews for king an Idumean Arab, of the country of thoſe Amalekites ſo much curſed by the Jews. It was this ſame Herod, of whom St. Matthew relates, that he had all the little children put to death in the neighbourhood of Bethlehem, upon being informed that a king of the Jews was born in that village; and that three magi, conducted by a ſtar, came to offer him preſents.

Thus were the Jews almoſt conſtantly ſubjugated or ſlaves. We know how they revolted againſt the Romans, and Titus had them all ſold at market for the price of the animal of which they would not eat.

They met with a ſtill more ſhocking fate under the emperors Trajan and Adrian, and they de-

ſerved it. An earthquake happened in the time of Trajan, which ſwallowed up the fineſt city of Syria. The Jews thought this was the ſignal of God's wrath againſt the Romans: they aſſembled, and armed themſelves in Africa and in Cyprus: they were animated with ſuch rage, that they devoured the limbs of the Romans, whom they had ſlain. But ſoon after, all the guilty were executed. Thoſe who remained were animated with the ſame rage under Adrian, when Barcochebas, who called himſelf their Meſſiah, headed them. This fanaticiſm was ſtifled by torrents of blood.

It is ſurpriſing that there ſhould remain any Jews. The famous Benjamin of Tudel, a very learned Rabbin, who travelled in Europe and Aſia, in the twelfth century, computed that there were three hundred and eighty thouſand Jews of the ancient tribes, aſſembled under one ſovereign. The Jews never had any country to themſelves ſince the time of Veſpaſian, except ſome hamlets of Arabia Felix towards the Red-Sea. Mahomet was at firſt obliged to keep terms with them. But he, at length, deſtroyed the little dominion which they had eſtabliſhed in the north of Mecca. It is from the time of Mahomet, that they have ceaſed to compoſe a body of people.

In purſuing ſimply the hiſtorical thread of the little Jewiſh nation, we ſee that they could have no other end. They boaſt of having iſſued from Ægypt like a band of robbers, carrying away every

thing from the Ægyptians; they glory in having never ſpared either age, or ſex, or infancy, in the villages and boroughs they could ſeize upon. They have the effrontery to diſplay an irreconcileable hatred againſt other nations; they revolt againſt all their maſters; ever ſuperſtitious; ever envious of others good; ever barbarous; abject in misfortunes, and inſolent in proſperity. Such were the Jews in the opinion of the Greeks and Romans, who could read their books: but in the eyes of chriſtians, enlightened by the faith which they perſecuted, they prepared the way for us. They have been the heralds of providence.

The other two nations, who are wandering like the Jews in the Eaſt, and who, like them, do not unite with any other people, are the Banians, and the Parſis called Guebres. Theſe Banians, whoſe talent conſiſts in trade, like the Jews, are the deſcendents of the firſt peaceable inhabitants of India; they have never mixed their blood with foreign blood, any more than the Brachmans. The Parſis are thoſe ſame Perſians, who were formerly monarchs of the Eaſt, and ſovereigns of the Jews. They have been diſperſed ſince the time of Omur, and cultivate in peace part of the land where they reigned, faithful to that ancient religion of the Magi, adoring one only God, and preſerving the ſacred fire, which they look upon as the work and emblem of the Divinity.

I do not reckon thoſe remains of the Ægyptians,

who adored the ſecrets of Iſis, and who no longer ſubſiſt but in ſome vagabond troops, that will ſoon be eternally annihilated.

CHAP. XLIII.

Of the JEWISH PROPHETS.

WE will take care not to confound the Nabim and the Roheim of the Hebrews, with the impoſtures of the other nations. We know that God did not communicate himſelf to the Jews, except in ſome particular caſes; as for example, when he inſpired Balaam the prophet of Meſopotamia, and when he made him utter the contrary of what he was to have been made to ſay. This Balaam was the prophet of another God, and yet it is not ſaid that he was a falſe prophet. We have already obſerved that the prieſts of Ægypt were prophets and ſeers. What idea was affixed to this word? that of inſpired. At one time the inſpired divined the paſt, and ſometimes the future: they often confined themſelves to figurative expreſſions. Wherefor St. Paul quotes theſe verſes of a Grecian poet, named Aratus: "All things live in God, all things "move, all things breathe in God*;" he calls this poet a prophet.

* Acts of the Apoſtles, chap. 17.

Were the title and quality of prophet, dignities amongſt the Hebrews, that is, a particular miniſtry legally fulfilled by certain choſen perſons, in the manner of the Pythian dignity at Delphos? No; prophets were nothing more than ſuch perſons as felt themſelves inſpired, and to whom viſions appeared. Hence it was that falſe prophets often roſe without miſſions, who thought that they had the ſpirit of God, and who frequently occaſioned great misfortunes, like the prophets of the Cevennes in the beginning of this century.

It was difficult to diſtinguiſh the falſe prophet from the true one. Wherefor Manaſſeh, king of Judea, had Iſaiah ſawn aſunder. The king Sedecias could not decide between Jeremiah and Ananiah, who foretold contrary things; and he impriſoned Jeremiah. Ezekiel was ſlain by Jews his fellow captives. Micaiah having propheſied misfortunes to king Ahab and Joſephat, another prophet, named Tſedekia, ſon to Cana, gave him a ſlap on the face, ſaying the ſpirit of the Eternal has paſſed from my hand upon thy cheek. Ozeus, chap. ix. declares that the prophets are fools, *ſtultum prophetam, inſanum virum ſpiritualem*. The prophets treated one another as viſionaries and liars. There was no other method then of ſeparating the true from the falſe but by waiting for the accompliſhment of the predictions,

Eliſha, having repaired to Damaſcus in Syria, the king, who was ſick, ſent him forty camels laden

with preſents, ro know if he ſhould recover: Eliſha replied, "that the king might recover, but that "he would die." The king died in fact. If Eliſha had not been a prophet of the true God, he might at all events have been ſuſpected of equivocation; for if the king had not died, Eliſha had foretold his cure, in ſaying he might recover, and as he had not ſpecified the time of his death. But having confirmed his miſſion by ſtriking miracles, his veracity could not be called in queſtion.

We ſhall not here join with commentators in their endeavours to diſcover what was the double ſpirit that Eliſha received from Elijah; nor the ſignification of the cloak which Elijah gave him, in aſcending to heaven in a car of fire drawn by flaming horſes, ſuch as are figured by the Greeks in poetry, when they repreſent the car of Apollo. We ſhall not fathom the type, what was the myſtical ſenſe of thoſe forty-two little children, who, upon ſeeing Eliſha in the croſs way leading to Bethel, ſaid to him in laughing, "Mount, bald-pate, mount;" and the prophet's vengeance thereupon, in calling forth two bears, who devoured the little innocents. The facts are known, and the ſenſe may, perhaps, be latent.

An eaſtern cuſtom ſhould be noticed here, which the Jews carried to a ſurpriſing height. This uſage was not only ſpeaking in allegories, but expreſſing by ſingular actions things they wanted to ſignify. Nothing was then more natural than this cuſtom;

for men not having for any length of time written their thoughts except in hieroglyphics, they muſt have accuſtomed themſelves to ſpeak as they wrote.

Thus the Scythians (if Herodotus is to be credited) ſent to Darah, whom we call Darius, a bird, a mouſe, a frog, and five arrows; which ſignified that if Darius did not fly as ſwift as a bird, or if he did not hide himſelf like a mouſe, or a frog, he would periſh by their arrows. The ſtory may not be true; but it is always a teſtimony of the emblems in uſe in thoſe diſtant times.

Kings wrote in ænigmas; we have examples of this in Hiram, in Solomon, and in the queen of Sheba. Tarquin the Proud, being conſulted in his garden by his ſon, upon the proper method of behaving to the Gabians, anſwers only by beating down the poppies, which grew higher than the other flowers. By this he ſufficiently expreſſed that the great ſhould be exterminated, and the people ſpared.

To theſe hieroglyphics we may attribute fables, which were the firſt kind of writing amongſt men. Fable is of a much more ancient date than ſimple hiſtory.

We muſt be a little familiarized with antiquity not to be ſcared at the actions and ænigmatical diſcourſes of the Jewiſh prophets.

Iſaiah wants to acquaint king Achas, that he will in ſome years be delivered from the king of Syria, and the melkor petit king of Samaria united againſt him;

he ſays to him, "Before a child is of age to diſcern "good from evil, you will be delivered from theſe "two kings. The lord will hire a razor to ſhave "the head, the hair of the groin (which is ſignified "by the feet,) the beard, etc." Then the prophet takes two witneſſes, Zachariah and Uriah; he lies with the propheteſs; ſhe brings forth a child, the Lord gives it the name of Maher-Salal-has-bas, "divide quickly the ſpoils:" and this ſignifies that the ſpoils of the enemies ſhall be divided.

I do not enter into the allegorical and infinitely reſpectable ſenſe which is given to this propheey; I ſhall confine myſelf to the conſideration of thoſe cuſtoms which appear ſo extravagant to us at preſent.

The ſame Iſaiah walks quite naked in Jeruſalem, to ſignify that the Ægyptians ſhall be entirely ſtript by the king of Babylon.

What! will it be ſaid, is it poſſible that a man ſhould walk quite naked in Jeruſalem, without being taken notice of by juſtice? Yes, certainly; Diogenes was not the only one of antiquity who had this effrontery. Strabo, in his fifteenth book, ſays there was a ſect of Brachmans in India, who would have been aſhamed of wearing any cloathing. We may ſtill ſee penitents in India, who walk naked, loaded with chains, and an iron ring fixed to the *penis*, to expiate the crimes of the people. There are alſo ſome in Africa and in Turkey. Theſe manners are not our manners; and I do not believe that

in the time of Iſaiah, there was a ſingle cuſtom that reſembles any of ours.

Jeremiah was only fourteen years of age when he received the ſpirit. God ſtretched out his hand, and touched his mouth, becauſe he had ſome difficulty in ſpeaking. He immediately ſees a boiling cauldron turned toward the north: this cauldron repreſents the people, who are to come from the north; and the boiling water ſignifies the misfortunes of Jeruſalem.

He purchaſes a flaxen belt, puts it round his loins, and is going to hide it by God's order in a hole near the Euphrates. He afterwards returns for it, and finds it rotten. He explains to us himſelf the parable, ſaying that the pride of Jeruſalem ſhall rot.

He puts ropes round his neck, he loads himſelf with chains, he puts a yoke upon his ſhoulders: he ſends theſe cords, chains, and yoke, to the neighbouring kings, to direct them to ſubmit to the king of Babylon, Nebuchodonoſer, in whoſe favour he propheſies.

Ezekiel may ſurprize ſtill more; he foretels to the Jews that the fathers will eat their children, and children will eat their fathers. But before this prediction is made, he ſees four animals ſparkling with light, and four wheels covered with eyes; he eats a volume of parchment; he is bound with chains. He draws a plan of Jeruſalem upon a brick; he throws down an iron pan; he lies three hundred and ninety days upon the left ſide, and forty days

upon the right ſide. He is to eat bread made of wheat, barley, beans, lentiles, millet, and to cover it with human excrements. Thus, ſaid he, will the children of Iſrael eat their bread beſmeared with thoſe nations among whom they ſhall be driven. But after having eat this bread of ſorrow, God allows him to cover it with only the excrement of oxen.

He cuts off his hair, and divides it into three parts; the firſt he puts into the fire, he cuts the ſecond with a ſword round the city, and diſperſes the other with the wind.

This ſame Ezekiel has ſtill more ſurpriſing allegories.

He introduces the Lord, who ſpeaks in this manner. "When thou waſt born, thy navel-ſtring "was not cut, thou waſt neither waſhed nor ſalted; "thou haſt become big; thy breaſt is formed, thy "hair has appeared; I paſſed, I knew it was the "time for lovers—I covered thee, and I ſtretched "myſelf over thine ignominy—I gave thee covering "for thy legs and feet, gowns of cotton, bracelets, "necklace, and ear-rings—But fully confident of "thy beauty, thou haſt given thyſelf up to forni-"cation—thou haſt built a bad ſpot; thou haſt pro-"ſtituted thy ſelf in the open ways; thou haſt o-"pened thy legs to every paſſenger—thou has "ſought the moſt robuſt—courtezans receive mo-"ney, and thou haſt given money to thy lovers."

" * Oolla has committed fornication upon me, " ſhe hath been furiouſly enamoured with her lo- " vers, princes, magiſtrates, and cavaliers —Her " ſiſter Ooliba hath proſtituted herſelf with greater " rage—Her luxury ſought thoſe who had the " member of an aſs, and who—like horſes."

Theſe expreſſions appear to us very indecent and barbarous: they were not conſidered in this light among the Jews; they ſignified the apoſtacies of Jeruſalem and Samaria. Theſe apoſtacies were frequently repreſented as fornication or adultery. Once more, we muſt not judge of the manners, cuſtoms, and modes of expreſſion of the ancients by our own: they no more reſemble each other than the French language does the Chaldean and the Arabic.

The Lord, at firſt, orders the prophet Hoſea chap. i. to take for his wife a proſtitute, and he obeys. This proſtitute bears him a ſon. God calls this ſon Jezreel; this is a type of the houſe of Jehu, which muſt periſh, becauſe Jehu had killed Joram in Iſrael. The Lord afterwards commands Hoſea, to wed an adultereſs, who was beloved by another, as the Lord loves the children of Iſrael, who pay reſpect to foreign gods, and who love the ſkin of the grape, chap. iii. The Lord in the prophecy of Amos threatens, that the cows of Samaria, ch. vi. ſhall be put into the cauldron. In a word, every

† Ezek. chap. xxiii.

thing is oppoſite to our manners and the turn of our minds; and if we examine the cuſtoms of all the Eaſtern nations, we ſhall find them equally oppoſite to our uſages, not only in remote times, but even at preſent, when we are better acquainted with them.

CHAP. XLIV.

Of the PRAYERS of the JEWS.

THERE are but few prayers of ancient people remaining. We have but two or three formularies of the myſteries and the ancient prayer to Iſis related in Apuleius. The Jews have preſerved theirs. If the character of a nation may be conjectured from the prayers which they offer up to God, we ſhall eaſily perceive that the Jews were a carnal and ſanguinary people. They rather ſeem in their pſalms to wiſh the death of the ſinner than his converſion; and in the eaſtern ſtile, they require of God all terreſtrial bleſſings.

" Thou ſhalt water the mountains, the earth " ſhall be glutted with fruits.

" He cauſeth the graſs to grow for the cattle, " and herb for the ſervice of man, that he may " bring forth food out of the earth; and wine, " that maketh glad the heart of man, and oil to " make his face to ſhine. Pſ. civ.

" Judah is a kettle full of meat, the mount of " the Lord is a congealed mount, a fat mountain: " Why do you look upon the congealed moun- " tains?" Pſ. cvii.

But it muſt be acknowleged that the Jews curſed their enemies in a ſtyle no leſs figurative.

" Aſk of me, and I ſhall give thee the heathen " for thine inheritance--and the outermoſt parts of " the earth for thy poſſeſſion. Thou ſhalt break " them with a rod of iron. Pſ. ii.

" Give them according to their deeds, and ac- " cording to the wickedneſs of their endeavours: " give them after the work of their hands, render " to them their deſert. Pſ. xxvii.

" Let the wicked be aſhamed, and let them be " ſilent in the grave. Pſ. xxx.

" Take hold of the ſhield and buckler, and ſtand " up for mine help. Draw out alſo the ſpear, and " ſtop the way againſt them that perſecute me-- " Let them be confounded and put to ſhame--Let " them be as chaff before the wind--Let his net " that he hath hid catch himſelf. Pſ. xxxiv.

" Let death ſeize upon them, and let them go " down quickly into hell. Pſ. liv.

" Break their teeth, O God, in their mouth: " break out the great teeth of the young lions, O " Lord. Pſ. lvii.

" Let them return and let them make a noiſe " like a dog--let them wander up and down for " meat, and grudge if they be not ſatisfied. Pſ. lviii.

" Through God ſhall we do valiantly: for it is " he that ſhall trade down our enemies. Pſ. lix.

" Rebuke the company of ſpearmen, the multi- " tude of bulls, with the calves of the people; that " thy foot may be dipped in the blood of thine " enemies, and the tongue of thy dogs in the ſame. Pſ. lxvii.

" Pour out thine indignation upon them, and let " thy wrathful anger take hold of them—Let their " habitation be deſolate, and let none dwell in their " tents. Pſ. lxxvii.

" Pour out thy wrath upon the heathen that " have not known thee. Pſ. lxxviii.

" Do unto them as unto the Midianites—O my " God, make them like a wheel; as the ſtubble " before the wind, as the fire burneth the wood. " Pſ. lxxxii.

" Set thou a wicked man to rule over him, and " let Satan ſtand at his right hand; when he ſhall " be judged, let him be condemned, and let his " prayer become ſin. Let his children be father- " leſs, and his wife a widow—Let his children be " continually vagabonds, and let them beg. Let " the extortioner catch all that he hath. Pſ. cix.

" The Lord is righteous, he hath cut aſunder " the cords of the wicked—Let them be as graſs " on the houſe tops. Pſ. cxxviii.

" Happy ſhall he be that taketh and daſheth thy " little ones againſt the ſtones." Pſ. cxxxvi.

We ſee that if God had granted all the prayers

of his people, there had remained nothing but Jews upon earth; for they deteſted all nations, and they were deteſted by them; and by inceſſantly requiring God to exterminate all thoſe whom they hated, they ſeemed to aſk the deſtruction of the whole earth. But we ſhould always remember, that the Jews were not only the cheriſhed people of God, but the inſtruments of his vengeance. It was by them that he puniſhed the ſins of other nations, as he puniſhed his people by theſe. It is no longer allowed to offer up the ſame prayers now, and requeſt of him to let us rip up the bellies of mothers and thoſe of children ſtill ſucking at the breaſt, and that they be daſhed to pieces againſt the ſtones of the earth. God being acknowleged for the common father of all men, no one people make theſe imprecations againſt their neighbours. We have ſometimes been as cruel as the Jews; but in ſinging their pſalms, we do not turn the ſenſe of them againſt the people who are at war with us. This is one of the great advantages of the law of forgiveneſs over the law of rigour; and would it had pleaſed God that under a holy law, and with divine prayers, we had not ſhed our brother's blood, und ravaged the earth in the name of a God of mercy!

CHAP. XLV.

Of JOSEPHUS, the JEWISH HISTORIAN,

WE ſhould not be aſtoniſhed that the hiſtory of Flavian Joſephus ſhould meet with antagoniſts, when it appeared at Rome. It is true there were but very few copies of it: an able copyiſt could not tranſcribe it in leſs than three months. The books were very dear and very ſcarce: few Romans deigned to read the Annals of an inſignificant nation of ſlaves, whom the nobles and the plebeians equally deſpiſed. It nevertheleſs appears by Joſephus's anſwer to Appion, that he met with a ſmall number of readers; and we alſo find that this ſmall number looked upon him as a liar and a viſionary.

We ſhould put ourſelves in the place of the Romans in the time of Titus, to conceive with what contempt, mixt with horror, the conquerors of the known world, and the legiſlators of nations, muſt have looked upon the hiſtory of the Jewiſh people. Theſe Romans could ſcarce know that Joſephus had drawn the greateſt part of his facts from the ſacred books dictated by the Holy Ghoſt. They could not have been inſtructed that Joſephus had added many things to the Bible, and had paſſed many over in ſilence. They were unacquainted that he

had taken the foundation of ſome of his ſtories from the third book of Eſdras; and that this book of Eſdras is one of thoſe which are called Apocryphal.

What muſt a Roman ſenator think in reading theſe Eaſtern tales? Joſephus † relates that Darius, the ſon of Aſtyages, had appointed the prophet Daniel governor of three hundred and ſixty cities, when he forbad, upon pain of death, to pray to any God for a month. Certainly the ſcripture does not ſay that Daniel governed three hundred and ſixty cities.

Joſephus ſeems to imagine afterwards that all the Perſians turned Jews.

The ſame Joſephus gives the ſecond temple of the Jews rebuilt by Zorobabel a ſingular origin.

"Zorobabel," ſays he, "was the intimate friend "of king Darius." A Jewiſh ſlave an intimate friend of the king of kings! this is much the ſame as if one of our hiſtorians ſhould tell us, that a fanatic of the Cevennes, releaſed from the gallics, was the intimate friend of Lewis XIV.

Be this as it may, according to Flavian Joſephus, Darius, who was a very ſenſible prince, propoſed to all his court a queſtion worthy of the *Mercure Gallant**, namely, which had the moſt power, wine, kings, or women? The perſon who gave the beſt anſwer was to be recompenſed with a flaxen head-dreſs, a purple robe, a golden necklace, to drink

† Book X. chap. xii.

* A periodical publication.

out of a golden cup, lie in a golden-bed, ride in a golden chariot, drawn by horſes with golden harneſſes, and become the king's couſin by patent.

Darius ſeated himſelf upon his golden throne to hear the anſwers of his academy of wits. One entered into a diſſertation in favour of wine, another was for kings. Zerobabel was an advocate for women. There is nothing ſo powerful as they; for I have ſeen, ſaid he, Apamea, the miſtreſs of the king my maſter, give his ſacred majeſty gentle ſlaps on the face, and take off his turban to dreſs her head with.

Darius found Zorobabel's anſwer ſo ſmart, that he immediately cauſed the temple of Jeruſalem to be rebuilt.

This ſtory is nearly ſimilar to that which one of our moſt ingenious academics relates of Soliman and a turnup-noſe, which has ſerved for the groundwork of a very pretty burleſque opera. But we are compelled to acknowlege, that the author of the turnup-noſe has not been gratified with either a golden bed, or a golden coach, and that the king of France has never called him couſin: we are no longer in the time of Darius.

Theſe reveries, with which Joſephus has crammed the holy books, were doubtleſs, amongſt the Pagans prejudicial to the facts which the Bible contains. The Romans could not diſtinguiſh between what had been drawn from an impure ſpring, and what Joſephus had extracted from a pure ſpring.

This ſacred Bible, which we have, was either unknown to the Romans, or as much deſpiſed by them as Joſephus himſelf. The whole was equally the object of raillery and that ſovereign contempt which the readers conceived for the Jewiſh hiſtory. The apparitions of angels to the patriarchs, the paſſage of the Red Sea, the ten plagues of Ægypt, the inconceivable multiplication of the Jewiſh people in ſo ſhort a time, and in ſo circumſcribed a ſpot; all the prodigies, which ſignalized this unknown nation, were treated with that diſdain which a people, conquerors of ſo many nations, a regal people, but to whom God had not divulged himſelf, naturally had for a little people reduced to ſlavery.

Joſephus knew very well that all he wrote would be irreconcileable to prophane writers: he ſays in ſeveral places, "the reader ſhall form what judg-"ment he pleaſes of this." He is afraid of ſtartling the minds of people; he diminiſhes as much as poſſible the faith that is due to miracles. We find he is every moment aſhamed of being a Jew, at the very time he is exerting himſelf to make his nation appear amiable to their conquerors. The Romans, who were endowed with no other than common ſenſe, and as yet had not faith, ſhould doubtleſs be forgiven, for not conſidering the hiſtory of Joſephus as any other than a miſerable collection of ridiculous fables, related to them in order to extract ſome money from his maſters. Bleſs God,

we who have the happineſs to be more enlightened than the Titus's, the Trajans, the Antoninus's, and the whole ſenate of Roman knights our maſters; we, who are enlightened by ſuperior luminaries, can diſtinguiſh between the abſurd fables of Joſephus, and the ſublime truths that are declared to us by the holy ſcripture.

CHAP. XLVI.

Of the FALSHOOD of FLAVIAN JOSEPHUS, relating to ALEXANDER and the JEWS.

WHEN Alexander, who was elected by all the Greeks like his father, (and as Agamemnon had formerly been) to go and revenge the injuries that Greece received from Aſia, had gained the victory of Iſſus, he became maſter of Syria, one of the provinces belonging to Darah or Darius; he wanted to ſecure Ægypt before he paſſed the Euphrates or the Tygris, and deprive Darius of all the poſts by which he could be furniſhed with fleets. To compaſs this deſign, which was the plan of a very great captain, it was neceſſary to lay ſiege to Tyre. This city was under the protection of the kings of Perſia, and was ſovereign of the ſea: Alexander took it, after an obſtinate ſiege of ſeven months, in which he diſplayed as much art as courage; the dyke which he had the reſolution to raiſe

upon the ſea coaſt is ſtill looked upon as the model, which ſhould be followed by all generals in ſimilar enterprizes. It was by imitating that Alexander, that the duke of Parma took Antwerp, and cardinal Richelieu Rochelle, if it be allowed to compare ſmall things with great. Rollin, indeed, ſays that Alexander took Tyre only becauſe the inhabitants ſcoffed the Jews, and that God would avenge the honour of his people. But Alexander might have had ſtill other reaſons; it was neceſſary, after having made Tyre ſubmit, not to loſe a moment before he ſeized the poſt of Peluſium. So that Alexander having made a forced march to ſurprize Gaza, he went from Gaza to Peluſium in ſeven days. It is thus faithfully related by Arrian, Quintus Curtius, Diodorus, and even Paul Oroſeus himſelf, according to the Journal of Alexander.

What doth Joſephus to raiſe his nation in ſubjection to the Perſians, fallen under the power of Alexander with all Syria, and afterwards honoured with ſome privileges by this great man? He pretends that Alexander had, in a dream at Macedon, ſeen Jaddus the high-prieſt of the Jews (ſuppoſing there was a Jewiſh prieſt whoſe name terminated in *us;*) that this prieſt had encouraged him to undertake his expedition againſt the Perſians, and that this was the reaſon that Alexander had attacked Aſia. He could not, then, avoid going ſix or ſeven days march out of his way, after the ſiege of Tyre to viſit Jeruſalem. As the high-prieſt Jaddus had

formerly appeared to Alexander in a dream, he received alſo in a dream an order from God to go and ſalute this king; he obeyed, and being dreſſed in his pontifical habit, followed by his Levites in ſurplices, he marched in proceſſion before Alexander. As ſoon as this monarch ſaw Jaddus, he recollected the ſame man who had inſtructed him in a dream ſeven or eight years before, to come and conquer Perſia; and this he told to Parmenio. Jaddus had upon his head his cap ornamented with a plate of gold, upon which a Hebrew word was engraven; Alexander, who was doubtleſs a proficient in Hebrew, immediately diſcovered the word Jehovah, and proſtrated himſelf with humility, knowing very well that none but God could have this name. Jaddus inſtantly diſplayed prophecies which clearly indicated that Alexander would conquer the empire of Perſia; prophecies that were ever made after the event had happened. He flattered Alexander, that God had choſen him to deſtroy all the hopes of his cheriſhed people, to reign in the Land of Promiſe, in the ſame manner as he had formerly choſen Nabucodonoſor and Cyrus, who had ſucceſſively poſſeſſed the Land of Promiſe. This abſurd ſtory of that Romance-writer Joſephus ſhould not, methinks, have been copied by Rollin, as if it had been atteſted by a holy writer.

But in this manner has ancient hiſtory been written, and modern hiſtory often the ſame.

CHAP. XLVII.

Of Popular Prejudices, to which the Sacred Writers have deigned to conform through Condescension.

THE holy books were made to teach morality and not phyſics.

The ſerpent was eſteemed by antiquity as the moſt ſkilful of all animals. The author of the Pentateuch is pleaſed to ſay, that the ſerpent was ſubtile enough to ſeduce Eve. Beaſts were ſuppoſed ſometimes to ſpeak; the holy writer makes the ſerpent and Balaam's aſs ſpeak. Many Jews and many learned Chriſtians have conſidered this hiſtory as an allegory; but whether it be emblematical or real, it is equally reſpectable. The ſtars were conſidered as points in the clouds: the divine author confines himſelf to this vulgar notion, and ſays, that the moon was created to preſide over the ſtars.

The common opinion was, that the heavens were ſolid; they were called in Hebrew Rakiak, which word implies a plate of metal, a body extended and firm, which we tranſlated into firmament. It contained waters, which were diſperſed by openings. The ſcripture chimes in with this phyſical opinion.

The Indians, the Chaldeans, and the Perſians, imagined that God had formed the world at ſix dif-

ferent times. The author of Geneſis, not to ſtartle the weakneſs of the Jews, repreſents God as forming the world in ſix days; though a ſingle word and a ſingle inſtant would have been ſufficient for his omnipotence. A garden and ſhade were looked upon as great bleſſings in a dry country, parched with the ſun; the divine author places the firſt man in a garden.

They had no idea of a being purely immaterial. God is always repreſented as a man: he walks at noon in the garden, he ſpeaks, and is ſpoken to.

The word Soul, Ruah, ſignifies breath, life; the ſoul is always uſed for life in the Pentateuch.

It was believed that there were nations of giants; and it is ſaid in Geneſis, that they were the children of angels and the daughters of men.

Brutes were granted a kind of reaſon. God, after the deluge, deigns to make aliance with brutes, the ſame as with men.

Nobody knew what the rainbow was; it was looked upon as ſomething ſupernatural, and Homer always talks of it in this manner. The ſcripture calls it the ark of God, the ſign of alliance.

Amongſt many errors which mankind had adopted, it was believed that animals might be produced of any colour that was deſired, by ſhowing thoſe colours to the mothers before they conceived: the author of Geneſis ſays, that Jacob had lambs ſpotted by this device.

All antiquity made uſe of charms againſt the bite

of ſerpents; and when the wound was not mortal, or when it was happily ſucked by quacks, called Pſilles, or when ſome local application had been ſucceſsfully made, it was never doubted but that the charms had operated. Moſes erected a god, a brazen ſerpent, whoſe look cured thoſe who had been bit with ſerpents. God turned a popular error into a new truth.

The notion that bees could be formed out of a rotten carcaſe was one of the moſt ancient errors. This idea was founded upon the daily experience of ſeeing flies and little worms covering the bodies of dead animals. From this experience, which deceived the eyes, all antiquity concluded that corruption was the principle of generation. As it was believed that a dead body produced flies, it was imagined that the certain method of producing bees was to prepare the bleeding ſkins of animals in a proper manner, to operate this metamorphoſis. It was not conſidered how great an averſion bees have for all corrupted fleſh, and how very averſe they are to all infection. The method of producing bees in this manner could not ſucceed: but this they attributed to an error in the preparation. Virgil, in his fourth book of the Georgics, ſays, "that this operation "was ſucceſsfully performed by Ariſteus;" but he alſo adds, that it "is a miracle," *mirabile monſtrum*.

This ancient prejudice is rectified in relating that a hive of bees was found by Sampſon in the jaws

of a lion, which he had torn to pieces with his hands.

It was alſo a vulgar notion that the aſp ſhuts its ear for fear of hearing the voice of the enchanter. The Pſalmiſt gives into this error, by ſaying, Pſ. lviii. "They are like the deaf adder, that ſtoppeth "her ear; which will not hearken to the voice of "charmers, charming never ſo wiſely."

The ancient opinion that women who have their menſes turn wine and milk, prevent butter from coagulating, and make young pigeons die in the dove-houſes, ſtill ſubſiſts with the vulgar, as well as lunar influences. It was thought that female purgation was the evacuation of corrupted blood; and that if a man approached his wife at that time, he would neceſſarily produce leprous and lame children. This notion ſo ſtrongly prevented the Jews, that in the xxth chapter of Leviticus, the man and woman are both condemned to death, who perform conjugal duty at this critical time.

In fine, the Holy Spirit is ſo inclinable to conform to vulgar prejudices. that the Saviour himſelf ſays, That new wine ſhould never be put into old caſks, and that the grain muſt rot to ripen.

St. Paul ſays to the Corinthians, in perſuading them to believe a reſurrection, "Thou fool, that "which thou ſoweſt is not quickened except it die." We know very well now, that the grain does not rot in the earth to grow; if it rotted it would not grow; but this error then prevailed: and the holy

ſcriptures deigned to draw uſeful compariſons from it. This is what St. Jerom calls ſpeaking oeconomically.

All convulſive diſorders were looked upon as poſſeſſions of the devil, as ſoon as the doctrine of devils was adopted. Amongſt the Romans as well as the Greeks, the epilepſy was called the ſacred diſorder. Melancholy, attended with a kind of madneſs, was ſtill a diſorder, the cauſe of which was unknown; thoſe who were ſeized with it ran barking about the tombs at night. They were called Demoniacs, and amongſt the Greeks, Lykantropes. The ſcripture allows of demoniacs, who wander amongſt the tombs.

Guilty people among the Greeks were frequently tormented by furies; they had reduced Oreſtes to ſuch a ſtate of deſpair, that he eat one of his fingers in one of his raving fits: they had haunted Alcmeon, Eteocles, and Polinices. The Helleniſt Jews, who were inſtructed in all the Grecian opinions, at length admitted among them certain kind of furies, foul fiends, devils who tormented men. It is true the Sadducees did not acknowlege devils; but the Phariſees received them a ſhort time before the reign of Herod. There were, at that time amongſt the Jews, exorciſts, who drove out the devils; they made uſe of a root, which they put under the noſe of the perſon poſſeſſed, and employed a formulary taken from a ſuppoſed book of Solomon. They were, at length, ſo ſkilful in the driving out

devils, that our Saviour, who, according to St. Matthew, was himſelf accuſed of driving them out by the power of Belzebub, grants the Jews the ſame power, and aſks them if it is by means of Belzebub that they triumph over evil ſpirits?

Certainly if the Jews, who put Jeſus to death, had the power of performing ſuch miracles; if the Phariſees in fact drove out devils, they performed the ſame prodigies as our Saviour operated; they had the gift which Jeſus communicated to his diſciples; and if they had it not, Jeſus conformed himſelf to the popular prejudices, in deigning to ſuppoſe that his implacable enemies, whom he called a race of vipers, had the gift of miracles, and prevailed over demons It is true that neither the Jews nor the Chriſtians any longer enjoy, at preſent, that prerogative which was for a length of time ſo common. There are always exorciſts, but we no more meet with devils, or people poſſeſſed—ſo much do things change with time! It was then according to the order of things that people ſhould be poſſeſſed; and it is proper there ſhould be none in that ſituation at preſent. The neceſſary prodigies to raiſe a divine edifice are uſeleſs, when it has attained its utmoſt ſummit Every thing on earth is changed; virtue alone never alters; it reſembles the light of the ſun, which contains ſcarce any known matter, and which is always pure, ever immutable, when all the elements are inceſſantly con-

founded. It is only neceſſary for us to open our eyes to bleſs its author

CHAP XLVIII.

Of ANGELS, GENII, and DEVILS of the ANCIENT NATIONS, and amongſt the JEWS.

EVERY thing has its ſource in the nature of the human mind; all men in power, magiſtrates, and princes, had their meſſengers; it is probable, that the gods had alſo theirs. The Chaldeans and Perſians ſeem to be the firſt people who mention angels. The Parſees, a religious ſect that worſhipped fire, and ſtill ſubſiſt, communicated to the author of the religion of the ancient Parſees,* the names of the ſeveral angels which the primitive Parſees acknowleged. They amounted to an hundred and nineteen, amongſt which we met with neither the name of Raphael, nor that of Gabriel, the Parſees having adopted them long afterwards. The names are Chaldean, and were unknown to the Jews before their captivity; for before the hiſtory of Tobit, we do not meet with the name of any angel, either in the Pentateuch, or the other Hebrew books.

The Perſians, in their ancient catalogue prefixed

* Hyde, *de religione veterum Perſarum.*

to the Sadder, reckoned but twelve devils, of which Arimanes was the chief. It afforded them at leaſt ſome conſolation, to reflect that there were more good genii in the world than demons, the foes of mankind.

We do not find that this doctrine was followed by the Ægyptians. The Greeks, inſtead of tutelary genii, had their ſubordinate or ſecondary deities, their heroes, and demi-gods. Inſtead of Devils, they had their Ates, Erinnis, and Eumenides. Plato, I think, was the firſt who ſpoke of a good and evil genius preſiding over the actions of men. After him, both the Greeks and Romans piqued themſelves upon each having his two genii; the evil one having more buſineſs and more ſucceſs than his antagoniſt.

When the Jews had, at length, given names to their celeſtial militia, they divided them into ten diſtinct claſſes; namely, the ſaints, the rapid, the ſtrong, the flames, the ſparks, the deputies, the princes, the ſons of princes, the images, the animated. But the muſter-roll of this hierarchy is only to be found in the Talmud and the Targum, and not in the writings of the Hebrew canon.

Theſe angels had conſtantly the human form, and thus are they ſtill repreſented with the addition of wings. Raphael conducted Tobit. The angels that appeared to Abraham and to Lot eat and drank with theſe patriarchs; and the ſavage fury of the inhabitants of Sodom too ſtrongly proves, that the

angels of Lot were corporeal beings. It would, indeed, be difficult to comprehend how angels could have converſed with men, and how theſe could have anſwered them, if they had not appeared in a human form.

The Jews had no other idea even of God. He ſpeaks the human tongue with Adam and Eve; he even ſpeaks to the ſerpent; he walks in the garden of Eden at mid-day. He deigned to converſe with Abraham, with the patriarchs, and with Moſes. There have been more commentators than one who have imagined that theſe words of Geneſis, "let us "make man like unto our image," ſhould be underſtood literally; that the moſt perfect of earthly beings was a feeble reſemblance of the form of his creator; and that this idea ſhould induce men never to degenerate.

Though the form of the rebellious angels, and their transformation into demons, be the foundation both of the Jewiſh and Chriſtian religion, it is remarkable that no mention is made of it either in Geneſis, the books of the law, or in any other canonical writings. In Geneſis we are expreſly told, that a ſerpent ſpoke to Eve and ſeduced her. It is there alſo obſerved that the ſerpent was the moſt cunning and ſubtile of all the beaſts of the field; and we have before obſerved, that this was the opinion of all nations in regard to the ſerpent. It is farther poſitively aſſerted in Geneſis, that the hatred of mankind towards the ſerpent ariſes from

the ill office done by that creature to human-kind; that from this time, it has endeavoured to bite us, and we have endeavoured to cruſh it; and that for its bad actions it is condemned in theſe words, "upon thy belly ſhalt thou go, and duſt ſhalt thou eat all the days of thy life." It muſt be confeſſed, indeed, that ſerpents do not eat duſt; but all the people of antiquity believed they did.

We are inclined to believe that occaſion hath been taken from this repreſentation to perſuade mankind that this ſerpent was one of the rebellious angels transformed into demons, who came to avenge himſelf upon the works of God, and to corrupt them. There is not a ſingle paſſage however in the Pentateuch from which we can make this inference, by the feeble light of human reaſon.

Satan appears, in Job, to be the maſter of the earth, ſubordinate to God; but is there a man a little verſed in antiquity, who knows not that Satan is a Chaldean word; that this Satan was the Arimanius of the Perſians, adopted by the Chaldeans, the evil ſpirit that prevailed over man? Job is repreſented as an Arabian paſtor, living upon the confines of Perſia. We have already obſerved that the Arabian words retained in the Hebrew tranſlation of this ancient allegory evince that the book was firſt written by the Arabians. Flavian Joſephus, who does not include it among the writings of the Hebrew canon, removes all doubt upon this head.

Demons and devils, who were baniſhed from a

a globe of heaven, precipitated into the center of our globe, and eſcaping from their priſon to tempt mankind, have been conſidered for many ages as the authors of our damnation. But in this caſe, as in the former, this is an opinion of which no mention is made in the Old Teſtament. It is a traditional fact.

Some commentators have ſaid, that this paſſage of Iſaiah, "How haſt thou fallen from the ſky, O "Lucifer, who didſt appear in the morning?" "implies the fall of the angels; and that it was Lucifer who diſguiſed himſelf in the ſhape of a ſerpent to induce Eve and her huſband, to eat the apple.

But in truth ſo foreign an allegory reſembles thoſe ænigmas, which ſchool-boys were formerly taught to believe. A picture, for example, was diſplayed of an old man and a young woman. One ſaid this was winter and ſpring; another ſnow and fire; another a roſe and a thorn, or ſtrength and weakneſs, and he who ſolved it the moſt foreign to the purpoſe, who gave the moſt extraordinary explanation, gained the prize.

It is preciſely the ſame with regard to the ſingular application of the morning-ſtar to the devil. Iſaiah, chap. xiv. inſulting the death of a king of Babylon, ſays to him, "The whole earth is at reſt, "and is quiet; they break forth in rejoicing and "ſinging. Yea, the fir trees rejoice at thee; and "the cedars of Lebanon, ſaying, Since thou art

" laid down no feller is come amongſt us. Thy " pomp is brought down to the grave, and the " noiſe of the viols: the worm is ſpread over thee, " and the worms cover thee. How art thou fallen " from heaven, O Lucifer (Helel), ſon of the morn- " ing! how art thou cut down to the ground, " which didſt weaken the nations!"

This Helel is tranſlated into Latin by the word Lucifer; and this name has been given ſince to the devil, though there certainly is very little connexion between the devil and the morning-ſtar. It has been imagined that this devil, being a ſtar fallen from heaven, was an angel who had waged war againſt God; he could not do it alone, he muſt therefor have had accomplices. The fable of the giants armed againſt the gods, and who were ſpread through every nation, is, according to many commentators, a prophane imitation of the tradition, which teaches us that angels had riſen againſt their maſters. This notion received freſh ſtrength from the epiſtle of St. Jude, where it is ſaid, " And the " angels, which kept not their firſt eſtate, but left " their own habitation, he hath reſerved in ever- " laſting chains under darkneſs, unto the judgment " of the great day. Wo unto them, for they have " gone in the way of Cain. And Enoch alſo, the " ſeventh from Adam, propheſied of theſe, ſaying, " Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thouſands of " his ſaints, etc."

It has been imagined by ſome, that Enoch left a

written hiſtory of the fallen angels. But to this there are two objections. In the firſt place, Enoch wrote as little as Seth, to whom, nevertheleſs, the Jews impute ſome writings: and as to the falſe Enoch, cited by St Jude, his teſtimony is acknowleged to be forged by a Jew*. Secondly, this falſe Enoch ſays not a word of the rebellion or fall of the angels before the formation of man. He ſays word for word in his *Egregori*, or, as as they are ſtiled in our verſion, "the ſons of God."

"The number of men being prodigiouſly increaſed, they had very handſome daughters; the "angels watching over them, *Egregori*, became "enamoured, and were led into many errors. "They were provoked, and ſaid among themſelves, let us chuſe wives for ourſelves amongſt "the daughters of the men of the earth. Semiax-

* This Book of Enoch muſt nevertheleſs be of ſome antiquity; for we find it frequently quoted in the Teſtament of the twelve Patriarchs, another Jewiſh book corrected by a Chriſtian of the firſt century; and this Teſtament of the twelve Patriarchs is even quoted by St. Paul in his firſt epiſtle to the Theſſalonians, if repeating the page word for word can be called quoting it. In the ſixth chapter of the Patriarch Reuben, we find, "The ſcholar of God at length fell upon them," which St Paul ſays verbatim. Theſe twelve Teſtaments are not in other reſpects entirely conformable to Geneſis. The inceſt of Juda, for example, is not related in the ſame manner. Juda ſays, that being drunk, he abuſed his daughter in-law. The teſtament of Juda is remarkable in this reſpect, that it allows of ſeven organs of ſenſe in man, inſtead of five; he reckons life and the act of generation as two ſenſes. Moreover, all theſe patriarchs repent, in this Teſtament, having ſold their brother Joſeph.

" as, their prince, ſaid, I am afraid that you dare " not accompliſh ſuch a deſign, and that I alone " ſhall be anſwerable for the crime. They all re- " plied, let us vow to execute our deſign, and let " us be anathematized, if we fail. They united " themſelves then by oath, and uttered imprecati- " ons. They were two hundred in number. They " ſat out together in the time of Jared, and went " upon the mountains called Hermonium, on ac- " count of their oath. The names of their chiefs " were, Semiaxas, Atarculph, Araciel, Chobabiel " Hoſampſich, Zaciel, Parmar, Thauſael, Samiel, " Tiril, Sumiel.

" Theſe and the reſt took women unto them, in " the year eleven hundred and ſeventy of the crea- " tion of the world. From this commerce ſprung " three generations of men, the giants Naphilim, " etc."

The author of this fragment writes in a ſtile, which ſeems to belong to the primitive times; it carries with it the ſame ſimplicity. He names the perſonages, and does not forget the dates; but without either reflections or maxims: this is the ancient oriental manner.

We ſee that this ſtory is founded on Geneſis, chap. vi. " There were giants in the earth in thoſe " days; and even after that, when the ſons of God " came in unto the daughters of men, and they " bore children to them; the ſame became mighty " men, which were of old men of renown."

Both the book of Enoch and Geneſis perfectly agree, in regard to the copulation of theſe angels, or ſons of God, with the daughters of men, and alſo as to the race of giants, their iſſue. But neither this book of Enoch, nor any one of the Old Teſtament, mentions a ſyllable of the war of the angels againſt God, their defeat, their deſcent into hell, nor of their enmity to mankind.

No mention is made of evil ſpirits, or the devil, but in the allegory of Job, which we have ſpoken of, and which is not a Jewiſh book; and in the adventure of Tobit. The devil Aſmodea, or Shammadey, who killed the firſt ſeven huſbands of Sarah, and whom Raphael diſlodged with the ſmoke of a fiſh's liver, was not a Jew devil, but a Perſian. Raphael went and chained him in Upper Ægypt; but it is certain that the Jews having no idea of hell, they could not have any of devils. They began, very late, to believe in a hell and the immortality of the ſoul; and this was not till the ſect of the Phariſees prevailed. They were, therefor, very far from thinking the ſerpent which tempted Eve was a devil, or fallen angel, precipitated into hell. This opinion, which ſerves as the foundation-ſtone of the whole edifice, was laid down laſt of all. Not that we have the leſs reverence for the hiſtory of the fallen angels; but we know not whence to deduce its origin.

Belzebub, Belphegor, and Aſtorath, were called devils; but theſe were ancient gods of Syria. Bel-

phegor was the god who preſided over marriage; Belzebub, or Bel-ſe-buth, ſignified the Lord who preſerved inſects. Even king Okoſias had conſulted him as a god, to know if he would be cured of a diſorder; and Elijah, who was affronted at this ſtep, ſaid, "Is there no God in Iſrael, that the God of "Ekron muſt be conſulted?"

Aſtorath ſignified the moon, and the moon did not expect to be transformed into a devil.

The apoſtle Jude ſays again, "that the devil "quarrelled with the angel Michael about the bo-"dy of Moſes." But we find nothing ſimilar to this in the Jewiſh canons. This diſpute of Michael with the devil, is only in an apocryphal book, intitled the Analyſis of Moſes, quoted by Origen in the third book of his Principii.

It is therefor certain, that the Jews acknowleged no devils, till about the time of their captivity in Babylon. They borrowed this doctrine from the Perſians, who had it from Zoroaſter.

Theſe facts cannot be diſputed, except by ignorance, fanaticiſm, or want of candour; and we ſhould add, that religion has nothing to dread from the conſequences. God certainly allowed the belief of good and evil genii, of the immortality of the ſoul, and of eternal rewards and puniſhments, to be received by twenty different nations before it reached the Jews. Our holy religion has conſecrated theſe doctrines; it has eſtabliſhed what the others had only a glimpſe of; and that, which a-

mong the ancients was nothing more than an opinion, has become by revelation one of the divine truths.

CHAP. XLIX.

Whether the JEWS taught other NATIONS, or whether they were taught by them.

HOLY writ having never determined whether the Jews were the maſters or the diſciples of other nations, it is allowable to examine the queſtion.

Philo, in the account he gives of his miſſion to Caligula, begins by ſaying that Iſrael is a Chaldean word; that it was a name the Chaldeans gave to the juſt who were conſecrated to God: that Iſrael ſignified ſeeing God. This alone ſeems to prove, that the Jews did not call Jacob Iſrael; that they did not take upon themſelves the names of Iſraelites, till ſuch time as they had ſome knowlege of this Chaldean tongue. Now they could have no knowlege of this tongue, but when they were ſlaves in Chaldea. Is it probable that they had already learnt in the deſerts of Arabia Petræa the Chaldean language?

Flavian Joſephus in his reply to Appion, Lyſimacus, and Molon,* plainly aknowleges, "that the

* Book II. chap. v.

"Ægyptians taught other nations circumciſion, as "Herodotus teſtifies." And would it really be probable that the ancient and powerful nation of the Ægyptians ſhould have adopted this cuſtom from a little people whom they abhorred, and who, according to their own account, did not practiſe circumciſion till the time of Joſhua?

The ſacred books themſelves teach us that Moſes was brought up in the Ægyptian ſciences; and they no where ſay that the Ægyptians ever learnt any thing from the Jews. When Solomon wanted to build his temple and his palace, did he not deſire the king of Tyre to ſend him workmen? It is even ſaid that he gave twenty cities to the king of Hiram to obtain workmen and cedar: this was doubtleſs paying very dear, and the bargain was very ſtrange; but did the Tyrians ever aſk any artiſts of the Jews?

The ſame Joſephus whom we have mentioned, acknowleges that his nation, which he ſtrives to raiſe, "had not for a long time any commerce with "other nations;" that it was "particularly un-"known to the Greeks, who were acquainted with "the Scythians and the Tartars. Is it ſurpriſing," he adds * "that our nation diſtant from the ſea, "and not piquing themſelves upon having written "any thing, ſhould be ſo little known?"

When the ſame Joſephus relates with his uſual exaggerations, the manner equally honourable as

* Book I. chap. v.

incredible, in which the king Ptolomy Philadelphus purchaſed a Greek tranſlation of the Jewiſh books, done by Hebrew writers in the city of Alexandria; Joſephus, I ſay, adds that Demetrius of Phalereus, who ordered this tranſlation for his king's library, aſked one of the tranſlators, "how it happened that "no hiſtorian, no foreign poet, had ever ſpoke of "the Jewiſh books?" the tranſlator replied, "As "theſe laws are all divine, no one has dared to "undertake ſpeaking of them, and thoſe who have "thought proper to do it, have been chaſtiſed by "God. Theopompus, being inclined to inſert "ſome part of it in his hiſtory, loſt his ſenſes for "thirty years; but being acquainted in a dream, "that he had become an idiot for wanting to pe-"netrate into divine things, and acquaint the pro-"phane* therewith, he appeaſed the wrath of God "by prayers, and recovered his ſenſes.

"Theodectes, a Grecian poet, having intro-"duced ſome paſſages, which he had taken from "our holy books, in a tragedy, became blind; and "did not recover his ſight till after he had ac-"knowleged his fault."

Theſe two ſtories of Joſephus, which are unworthy of a place in hiſtory, or of being related by a man that has common ſenſe, are in fact contradictory to the praiſes he beſtows upon this Greek tranſlation of the Jewiſh books; for if it was a crime

* Joſeph. Hiſt. of the Jews, book XII. chap. xii.

to inſert any part of them in another language, it was, doubtleſs, a far greater crime to enable all the Greeks to underſtand them. Joſephus, in relating theſe tales, at leaſt agrees that the Greeks never had any knowlege of the writings of his nation.

On the contrary, as ſoon as the Hebrews were eſtabliſhed in Alexandria, they ſtudied Grecian literature; they were called the Helleniſt Jews. It is therefor doubtleſs, that the Jews from the time of Alexander learned many things from the Greeks, whoſe language was become that of Aſia Minor, and of part of Ægypt; and that the Greeks could acquire nothing from the Hebrews.

CHAP. L.

Of the ROMANS. The beginning of their EMPIRE and their RELIGION; their TOLERATION.

THE Romans cannot be reckoned amongſt the primitive nations. Rome has exiſted only ſeven hundred and fifty years before our vulgar æra. When they had rites and laws, they adopted them from the Tuſcans and the Greeks. The Tuſcans communicated to them the ſuperſtition of augurs; a ſuperſtition, nevertheleſs, founded upon phyſical obſervations; upon the paſſage of birds, from whence they foretold the change of the atmoſphere. It

appears that all ſuperſtition hath ſomething natural for its principle, and that many errors are derived from the truth that is abuſed.

The Greeks furniſhed the Romans with the law of the twelve tables. A people, who apply to another nation for laws and gods, muſt be a ſmall and barbarous people: and ſuch were the firſt Romans. Their territories in the time of the kings and the firſt conſuls were not ſo extenſive as thoſe of Raguſa. We muſt not, by this title of king, underſtand a monarch ſuch as Cyrus, and his ſucceſſors. The chief of a little people living by rapine can never be deſpotic. The ſpoils are divided into common, and each one defends his liberty as his own property. The firſt kings of Rome were the captains of free-booters.

If we are to credit the Roman hiſtorians, this little people began by raviſhing the girls, and ſeizing upon their neighbours goods. They ſhould have been exterminated; but the ferocity and want which led them on to rapine, crowned their unjuſt enterprizes with ſucceſs: they maintained themſelves by being always at war; and at length, after about four centuries had elapſed, being more warlike than any other people, they made them all ſubmit one after the other, from the extremity of the Adriatic gulf to the Euphrates.

In the midſt of rapine, the love of their country always predominated, till the time of Sylla. This love of their country conſiſted for upwards of four

hundred years in bringing ſomething to the common ſtock of what had been pillaged from other nations. This is the virtue of robbers. Patriotiſm is murdering and fleecing other men. But great virtues exiſted in the heart of the republic The Romans, poliſhed by time, poliſhed all the barbarians they conquered, and became at laſt the legiſlators of the Weſt.

The Greeks appeared in the early times of their republic, as a nation ſuperior to the Romans. Theſe do not iſſue from the haunts of their ſeven mountains with a handful of hay (*manipli*) which ſerve them for ſtandards, only to ſack the neighbouring villages. They, on the contrary, are employed only in defence of their liberty. The Romans rob four or five hundred miles in circumference, the Equi, the Volſci, and the Antiates. The Greeks repulſe the innumerable armies of the great king of Perſia, and triumph over him by land and ſea. The victorious Greeks cultivate and improve all the fine arts; and the Romans are entirely ignorant of them, till about the time of Scipio Africanus.

I ſhall make two important obſervations here with reſpect to their religion; the firſt is, they adopted or allowed the doctrine of every other people, after the example of the Greeks; and that in reality the ſenate and the emperors always acknowleged one ſupreme God, as well as the greateſt part of the philoſophers and poets of Greece.

The toleration of all religions was a natural law,

engraven in the hearts of all men. For what right can one created being have to compel another to think as he does? but when a people are united, when religion is become a law of the ſtate, we ſhould ſubmit to that law. Now, the Romans by their law adopted all the Gods of the Greeks, who themſelves had altars for the gods unknown, as we have already obſerved.

The twelve tables ordained, *ſeparatim nemo habeſſit deos neve advenas niſi publice adſcitos*, "That no one ſhould have foreign or new gods without the public ſanction." This ſanction was given to many doctrines; and all the others were tolerated. This aſſociation of all the divinities of the world, this kind of divine hoſpitality, was the law of nations from all antiquity, except one or two little nations.

As there were no dogmas, there was no religious war. It was enough that ambition and rapine ſhould ſhed human blood, without religion accompliſhing the extermination of the world.

It is alſo very remarkable that amongſt the Romans no one was ever perſecuted for his way of thinking. There is not a ſingle example from the time of Romulus down to Domitian; and amongſt the Greeks, Socrates is the only exception.

It is again inconteſtible that the Romans, as well as the Greeks, adored one ſupreme God. Their Jupiter was the only God who was looked upon as the maſter of thunder, the only one that was ſtiled

the moſt great and the moſt good God, *Deus optimus maximus*. Thus from Italy to India and China, you find the doctrine of one ſupreme God, and toleration in all nations that were known.

With this knowlege of one God, with this univerſal indulgence, which are every where the fruit of cultivated reaſon, were blended innumerable ſuperſtitions, which were the ancient fruits of reaſon, erroneous and in its dawn. We know that the ſacred fowls, the goddeſs Pertunda, and the goddeſs Cloacina, are ridiculous.

Why did not the conquerors and legiſlators of ſo many nations aboliſh ſuch nonſenſe? Becauſe, being ancient, it was dear to the people and no way prejudicial to the government. The Scipios, the Paulus Emilius's, the Ciceros, the Catos, the Cæſars, had other employment than that of combating popular ſuperſtition When an ancient error is eſtabliſhed, policy avails itſelf of it, as a bit which the vulgar have put into their own mouth, till ſuch time as another ſuperſtition ariſes to deſtroy it, and policy profits of this ſecond error as it did of the firſt.

CHAP LI.

Questions upon the Conquest of the Romans, and their Decay.

How happened it that the Romans, who conſiſted of only three thouſand people, and who poſſeſſed nothing more than a borough of about a thouſand paces in circumference under Romulus, in time became the greateſt conquerors of the earth? and whence aroſe that the Jews who pretend to have had ſix hundred thirty thouſand ſoldiers upon coming out of Ægypt, who were ſurrounded with miracles, who fought under the God of armies, could never conquer Tyre and Sidon in their neighbourhood? could never be ready to attack them? Why were thoſe Jews almoſt continually in a ſtate of ſlavery? They poſſeſſed all the enthuſiaſm and all the ferocity neceſſary for conquerors; the God of armies was always at their head; and yet the Romans, who were one thouſand eight hundred miles diſtant from them, at length came to conquer them, and ſell them at market.

Is it not evident (humanly ſpeaking, and without conſidering ſecondary cauſes) that if the Jews, who were in hopes to conquer the world, were almoſt conſtantly in a ſtate of ſervitude, it was their own fault? And if the Romans ruled, did they not

deſerve it by their courage and their prudence? I muſt humbly beg pardon of the Romans for comparing them one inſtant to the Jews.

How came it that the Romans, for upw rds of four hundred and fifty years, could conquer only an extent of country of about twenty-five leagues? Was it not becauſe their number was very ſmall, and that the adverſaries, whom they conſtantly had to combat with, were not more numerous than themſelves? But having at length incorporated with themſelves their conquered neighbours, their forces were ſufficient to oppoſe Pyrrhus.

All the little nations that ſurrounded them being then become Romans, they compoſed a people entirely warlike, ſufficiently formidable to deſtroy Carthage.

Why were the Romans employed ſeven hundred years to obtain at length an empire about as extenſive as that which Alexander conquered in ſeven or eight years? Was it becauſe they had always warlike nations to oppoſe, and that Alexander had to do with an effeminate people?

How came the empire to be deſtroyed by barbarians? Were not theſe barbarians more robuſt and greater warriors than the Romans, enervated in turn under Honorius and his ſucceſſors? When the Cimbri came and threatened Italy in the time of Marius, the Romans ought to have foreſeen that the Cimbri, that is to ſay, the people of the North,

would deſtroy the empire when Marius was no more.

The weakneſs of the emperors, the factions of their miniſters and their eunuchs, the enmity which the ancient religion of the empire excited againſt the new one, the bloody quarrels that aroſe in Chriſtendom, theological diſputes left to the management of arms, and effeminacy to valour, multitudes of monks replacing huſbandmen and ſoldiers; every thing tended to introduce theſe barbarians, who could not have conquered the warlike republic, and who overwhelmed Rome languiſhing under cruel emperors and voluptuous devotees.

When the Goths, the Heruli, the Vandals, and the Huns, overſpread the Roman empire, what meaſures did the two emperors take to ſtop the torrent? The difference between *Omooſios* and *Omouſios* had thrown all the Eaſt and Weſt into confuſion. Theological perſecutions completed the deſtruction of every thing. Neſtorius, patriarch of Conſtantinople, who at firſt gained great credit under Theodoſius II. prevailed upon the emperor to perſecute thoſe who thought the penitent Chriſtian apoſtates ſhould be rebaptiſed; thoſe who thought that Eaſter ſhould be celebrated the fourteenth moon of March, thoſe who did not dip the baptized three times. In a word, he ſo much tormented the Chriſtians, that they in turn tormented him. He called the holy Virgin, Anthropotokos; his adverſaries, who wanted to have her called Theoto-

kos, and who, doubtleſs, were right, ſince the council of Epheſus decided it in their favour, commenced a violent perſecution againſt him. Theſe diſputes engaged every one's attention: and whilſt they were thus employed, the barbarians divided amongſt them Europe and Africa.

But why did not Aleric, who in the beginning of the fifth century marched from the banks of the Danube towards Rome, begin by attacking Conſtantinople, when he was maſter of Thrace? Why did he riſk being cramped between the eaſtern and weſtern empires? Is it natural that he ſhould want to paſs the Alps and Apennine mountains, when trembling Conſtantinople offered itſelf for conqueſt? The hiſtorians of thoſe times, as badly inſtructed as the people were ill-governed, do not unravel this myſtery; but it is eaſy to form a conjecture thereupon. Alaric had been general in the armies of Theodoſius II. a violent prince, an imprudent devotee, who loſt the empire by entruſting the Goths with its defence. He conquered with them Eugenius his competitor; but the Goths thereby learnt that they could gain victories for themſelves. Alaric and the Goths were mercenaries to Theodoſius. The pay they received became a tribute, when Arcadius, the ſon of Theodoſius, was upon the throne of the Eaſt. Alaric therefor ſpared his tributary, to fall upon Honorius and upon Rome.

Honorius's general was the celebrated Stilicon, the only one that could defend Italy, and who had

already ſtopt the progreſs of the barbarians. Honorius had him beheaded upon a mere ſuſpicion, without any kind of trial. It was more eaſy to aſſaſſinate Stilicon than to defeat Alaric. This unworthy emperor, being retired to Ravenna, left the barbarian, who was his ſuperior in every thing, to lay ſiege to Rome. The ancient miſtreſs of the world ſaved herſelf from the pillage at the price of five thouſand pounds weight of gold, thirty thouſand of ſilver, four thouſand robes of ſilk, three thouſand of purple, and three thouſand pounds of ſpice. The money of India paid the ranſom for Rome.

Honorius would not abide by the treaty. He entered Rome in 409; and a Goth there created an emperor, who became his firſt ſubject. The year after, being deceived by Honorius, he puniſhed him in ſacking Rome. Then all the weſtern empire was rent; the inhabitants of the North made incurſions on every ſide, and the emperors of the Eaſt could not maintain themſelves but by becoming tributary.

In this manner Theodoſius II. paid tribute to Attila. Italy, Gaul, Spain, and Africa, became the prey of every aſſailant. This was the fruit of Conſtantine's unnatural policy, who had transferred the Roman empire into Thrace.

Is there not ſome viſible deſtiny in the proſperity or deſtruction of ſtates? He that ſhould have foretold Auguſtus, that the Capitol would be one day

poſſeſſed by the prieſt of a religion derived from that of the Jews, would have greatly aſtoniſhed Auguſtus. Why did this prieſt afterwards ſeize upon the city of the Cicero's and Cæſars? Becauſe he found it in a ſtate of anarchy. He became maſter of it, without making ſcarce any effort, as the German biſhops about the thirteenth century became the ſovereigns of thoſe whom they ſerved as paſtors.

Every event produces another that was unexpected. Romulus did not imagine he ſhould lay the foundation of Rome for Gothic princes or biſhops. Alexander did not ſuſpect that Alexandria would ever belong to the Turks; and Conſtantine did not raiſe Conſtantinople for Mahomet II.

CHAP. LII.

Of the firſt PEOPLE who wrote HISTORY, and of the FABLES of the firſt HISTORIANS.

IT is inconteſtible that the moſt ancient annals of the world are thoſe of China. In theſe annals there is an uninterrupted ſucceſſion, circumſtantial, complete, judicious, without any mixture of the marvellous, and all ſupported by aſtronomical obſervations, for four thouſand one hundred and fifty-two years. They recur to many more diſtant ages, without indeed any preciſe date, but with that pro-

bability which ſeems to approach certainty. It is very likely that powerful nations, ſuch as the Indians, the Ægyptians, the Chaldeans, the Syrians, who had great cities, had alſo annals.

The wandering people muſt have been the laſt who wrote, having leſs means of procuring and preſerving archives, having few wants, few laws, few events, being occupied with nothing but the method of procuring a precarious ſubſiſtence, and being ſatisfied with oral tradition. A hamlet had never any hiſtory, a wandering people ſtill leſs, and a ſingle city very rarely.

The hiſtory of a nation cannot be written till very late; it is begun by ſome ſummary regiſters, which are preſerved, as far as they can be, in a temple or citadel. An unhappy war often deſtroys theſe annals, and the people muſt renew their labours twenty times, like ants whoſe habitations are trampled upon; many ages muſt elapſe before a hiſtory any way circumſtantial can ſucceed to theſe indigeſted regiſters; and this firſt hiſtory is conſtantly mingled with marvellous errors, to ſupply the place of truth that is deficient. Thus the Greeks had not their Herodotus, till the eightieth Olympaid, upwards of a thouſand years after the epocha inſcribed upon the marbles of Paros. Fabius Pector, the moſt ancient hiſtorian amongſt the Romans, did not write till the time of the Carthaginian war, about five hundred and forty years after the foundation of Rome.

Now, if theſe two nations, the moſt lively upon earth, the Greeks and Romans, our maſters, ſo late began their hiſtory, if our northern nations had no hiſtorian before Gregory of Tours, can we ſincerely believe that the vagabond Tartars, who ſleep upon ſnow, or the Troglodites, who hide themſelves in caverns, or wandering Arabian robbers, who rove upon ſandy mountains, had any Thucydides's, any Xenophons? Could they know any thing of their anceſtors? Could they gain any knowlege before they had any cities, before they inhabited them, before they had ſummoned thither all the arts of which they were deprived?

If the Samoiedes, or the Nazamons, or the Eſquimaux, ſhould come and produce antedated annals many centuries back, replete with aſtoniſhing feats of arms, and a continued ſeries of prodigies, which aſtoniſh nature, ſhould we not laugh at theſe poor ſavages? And if ſome people, fond of the marvellous, or intereſted in making it credited, ſhould torture their imagination to render theſe follies probable, ſhould we not deride their attempts? and if they ſhould add to this abſurdity the inſolence of affecting to hold the learned in contempt, and the cruelty of perſecuting thoſe who doubted, would they not be the muſt execrable of men? Let a Siameſe come and relate to me the metamorphoſes of Sammonocodom, and threaten to burn me if I offer any objections, how ſhould I behave to this Siameſe?

The Roman hiſtorians relate to us, indeed, that the god Mars had two children by a veſtal, in an age that there were no veſtals in Italy; that a ſhe-wolf nouriſhed theſe children, inſtead of devouring them, as we have already ſeen; that Caſtor and Pollux fought for the Romans; that Curtius caſt himſelf into a gulph, and that the gulph cloſed up; but the Roman ſenate never condemned to death thoſe who doubted of theſe prodigies: they were allowed to be laughed at in the Capitol.

There are in the Roman hiſtory very poſſible events that are not very probable. Many learned men have already called in queſtion the adventure of the geeeſe that ſaved Rome, and that of Camillus, who entirely deſtroyed the army of the Gauls. The victory of Camillus is, indeed, very brilliant in Titus Livius; but Polybius, who was earlier than Titus Livius, and more a ſtateſman, ſays preciſely the contrary: he aſſures us, that the Gauls, fearing to be attacked by the Veneti, departed from Rome loaded with booty, after having made peace with the Romans. Which ſhall we credit, Titus Livius or Polybius? We will at leaſt remain in doubt.

Muſt we not doubt again the puniſhment inflicted upon Regulus, who is cloſed in a box ſtruck round with iron ſpikes? This kind of death is certainly without example. Would this ſame Polybius, who was almoſt his cotemporary, Polybius, who was upon the ſpot, and who has written in ſo ſuperior a manner the Roman and Carthaginian

war, have paſſed over in ſilence ſo extraordinary and important a fact, and which would have ſo completely juſtified the inſincerity of the Romans toward the Carthaginians? How would this people have dared ſo barbarouſly to have violated the law of nations with Regulus, at a time that the Romans had in their hands ſeveral of the chief citizens of Carthage, upon whom they might have revenged themſelves?

In ſhort, Diodorus Siculus relates, in one of his fragments, that the children of Regulus, having very ill treated ſome of the Carthaginian priſoners, the ſenate of Rome reprimanded them, and paid reſpect to the law of nations. Would they not have allowed a juſt revenge to the children of Regulus, if their father had been aſſaſſinated at Carthage? The hiſtory of Regulus's puniſhment gained credit in time; the enmity that ſubſiſted between Rome and Carthage made it current; Horace ſung it, and it was longer doubted.

If we caſt our eyes upon the primitive times of our hiſtory of France, every thing is, perhaps, as falſe as it is obſcure and diſguſting; it is, at leaſt, very difficult to believe the adventure of one Childeric, and one Bazine, the wife of Bazin, and of a Roman captain elected king of the Franks, who had hitherto no kings.

Gregory of Tours is our Herodotus, with this difference, that this inhabitant of Tours is not ſo amuſing or ſo elegant as the Grecian. The monks,

who wrote after Gregory, had they more underſtanding or veracity? were they not ſometimes profuſe of extravagant praiſe to aſſaſſins who had given them lands? did they never caluminate wiſe princes who gave them nothing?

I know very well that the Franks, who invaded Gaul, were more cruel than the Lombards who ſeized upon Italy, or the Viſigoths who reigned in Spain. We meet with as many murderers, and as many aſſaſſinations in the annals of the Clovis's, the Thierres, the Childeberts, the Chilperics, and the Clotarius's, as in thoſe of the kings of Judea and Iſrael. Nothing certainly could be more brutal than thoſe barbarous times; nevertheleſs, is it not allowable to doubt of the execution of queen Brunehaut?

She was near eighty years of age, when ſhe died in 613 or 614. Fredegaire, who wrote towards the end of the eighth century, one hundred and fifty years after the death of Brunehaut (and not in the ſeventh century, as we find it by an error of the preſs in the Chronological Abridgement) Fredegaire, I ſay, aſſures us that Clotarius, a very pious prince, greatly fearing God, humane, patient, and meek, made queen Brunehaut ride round his camp upon a camel, and afterwards had her tied by the hair, an arm and one leg, to the tail of a vicious mare, which dragged her violently along the ground, broke her head upon the flint ſtones, and tore her to pieces, after which ſhe was burnt to

aſhes. The camel, the vicious mare, a queen eighty years of age, tied by the hair and a foot to the mare's tail, are not things that frequently occur.

It would perhaps be difficult to faſten a woman of that age by her head of hair, it being ſo thin, to a horſe's tail; and to tie her at the ſame time by the hair and a foot. And whence aroſe the pious deſign of burying Brunehaut in a tomb at Autun, after having burnt her in a camp? The monks Fredegaire and Aimoin aſſert it; but were theſe monks de Thous and Humes?

There was another monument erected for this queen in the thirteenth century in the abbey of St. Martin d'Autun, which ſhe had founded. In this ſepulchre was found the fragment of a ſpur. This ſpur it is ſaid was uſed upon the vicious mare. It is a pity that the ſkin of the camel, which the queen mounted was not alſo found. Is it not poſſible that this ſpur came there accidentally, or rather to do her honour? For in the fifteenth century a gilt ſpur was a great mark of honour. In a word, is it not reaſonable for us to ſuſpend our judgment upon this ſtrange adventure ſo badly authenticated? It is true, that Paquier ſays the death of Brunehaut "was "foretold by the Sybil."

All the barbarous ages are ages of horror and miracles. But is all that the monks have written to be believed? They were almoſt the only people who knew how to read and write, when Charlemain did not know how to ſign his name. They

have acquainted us with the dates of ſome great events. We believe with them that Charles Martel defeated the Saracens; but that he killed three hundred and ſixty-nine thouſand in battle, is ſaying a great deal.

They ſay that Clovis, the ſecond of that name, became an idiot; the thing is not impoſſible: but that God afflicted his brain, to puniſh him for having taken an arm of St. Denis in the church of thoſe monks to place in his oratory, is not ſo probable.

If there were no other than ſuch like ſtories to be erazed from the hiſtory of France, or rather the hiſtory of the kings of the Franks and their mayors, we might prevail upon ourſelves to read it. But how can we endure the barbarous lies with which it is replete? Villages and fortreſſes that never exiſted are continually beſieged. There was nothing beyond the Rhine but a few hamlets without walls, defended by wooden ſtakes and ditches. We know that Germany before the time of Henry the Fowler had no walled or fortified towns. In a word, all the details of thoſe times are ſo many fables, and what is worſe, tireſome fables.

CHAP. LIII.

Of the LEGISLATORS, who have ſpoken in the name of the GODS.

EVERY prophane legiſlator, who dared to feign that the Divinity had dictated to him his laws, was a palpable blaſphemer, becauſe he caluminated the gods; a traitor, becauſe he ſubjected his country to his own opinions.

There are two ſorts of laws, the one natural, common to all, and uſeful to all. "Thou ſhalt "not ſteal from, nor ſhalt thou kill thy neighbour; "thou ſhalt take reſpectful care of thoſe who gave "thee life, and who reared thee in thine infancy; "thou ſhalt not raviſh thy brother's wife; thou "ſhalt not lie to prejudice him; thou ſhalt aſſiſt him "in his wants, to merit ſuccour from him in turn." Such are the laws which nature has promulgated from the extremity of the iſlands of Japan to our weſtern coaſts. Neither Orpheus, nor Hermes, neither Licurgus, nor Numa, required Jupiter to appear at the roaring of thunder, to foretel theſe truths engraven in every heart.

If I had met with one of thoſe great quacks in a public ſquare, I ſhould have called out to him, Stop, do not compromiſe thus with the Divinity; thou wouldeſt cheat me, if thou makeſt him come down to teach us what we all knew; thou wouldeſt doubtleſs turn him to ſome other uſe; thou wouldeſt

avail thyſelf of my agreeing to eternal truths, to draw from me my conſent to thy uſurpation; I will impeach thee to the people as a tyrant who blaſphemeth.

Other laws are political: laws purely civil and eternally deſpotic, which at one time eſtabliſh ephori, at another conſuls, comites by centuries, or comites by tribes, an areopagus or a ſenate, ariſtocracy, democracy, or monarchy. We muſt be but ill acquainted with the human heart, to ſuppoſe it could be poſſible that a prophane legiſlator had ever eſtabliſhed any one of thoſe political laws in the name of the gods, otherwiſe than with an eye to his own intereſt. Men are thus deceived only for his emolument.

But have all prophane legiſlators been rogues, deſerving of a halter? No: juſt as it is at preſent in the aſſemblies of magiſtrates. Men of honour and upright principles are always to be met with, who propoſe things uſeful to ſociety, without boaſting that they were revealed to them: ſo amongſt legiſlators, ſome have been found who have inſtituted admirable laws, without attributing them either to Jupiter or Minerva, Such was the Roman ſenate, which gave laws to Europe, to little Aſia and Africa, without deceiving them; and ſuch in our days was Peter the Great, who might have impoſed laws upon his ſubjects more eaſily than Hermes did upon the Egyptians, Minos upon the Cretans, or Zamolxis upon the ancient Scythians.

THE END.